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A

TREATISE

ON THE

LAW AND THE GOSPEL;

By JOHN COLQUHOUN, D. D.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, LEITH.

The Second Edition Improved.

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The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John i. 17.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. Romans iii. 31.

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THE immediate design of the following Treatise is, to promote conviction of sin and misery, in the consciences of sinners, and true holiness, in the hearts and lives of saints.

THERE can be no evangelical holiness either of heart or of life, except it proceed from faith working by love; and no true faith either of the law or of the gospel, unless the leading distinctions between the one and the other, be spiritually discerned. Though, in the external dispensation of the covenant of grace, the law and the gospel are set before us, as one undivided system; yet, an immutable line of distinction is drawn between them: so that, the works of the law cannot pass over to the gospel, as a proper condition of the blessings promised in it; nor can the grace of the gospel pass over to the law, as a recompense for the works of men therein prescribed. To blend or confound them, has been a fatal source of error in the Christian Church; and has embarrassed many believers not a little, in their exercise of faith and practice of holiness. Troubled consciences

cannot ordinarily be quieted, except the doctrine of the gospel, be rightly distinguished from that of the law.

Though to some readers, there may appear, in several passages of the following work, a redundance of words, and too frequent a recurrence of the leading sentiments, and even of the same modes of expression; yet, the Author cannot but hope that, to others, these will, in some degree, serve to render his meaning the more obvious and determinate.

As it has been his constant endeavour, to render his subject easy and intelligible, to candid and devout readers even of the lowest capacity; so, it is his unfeigned desire, that this feeble attempt to promote the faith and holiness of believers, may obtain the gracious approbation of the Divine Redeemer, and by his blessing, be made subservient to the glorious cause of evangelical truth, and of vital godliness.

LEITH,
September, 11*th* 1815.

CONTENTS.

Page.

INTRODUCTION, - - - - - - - - - - 1

CHAP. I. *Of the law of God, or of the moral law in general,* - - - - - - - - - - 4

SECT. 1. *Of the law as inscribed on the heart of man in his creation,* - - - - - 7

SECT. 2. *Of the law, as given to Adam under the form of the covenant of works,* - 15

SECT. 3. *Of the law, in the hand of Christ the Mediator, as a rule of life to believers,* 31

Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 46

CHAP. II. *Of the law of God, as promulgated to the Israelites from mount Sinai,* - - 51

SECT. 1. *Of the covenant of grace, and of the ten Commandments, as the rule of duty to believers according to that covenant, as published from mount Sinai,* - - - - 54

SECT. 2. *Of the law in the form of a covenant of works, as displayed on mount Sinai to the Israelites,* - - - - - - - - 63

SECT. 3. *Of the law promulgated from mount Sinai to the Israelites, as the matter of a national covenant between God and them,* 72

Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 79

CHAP. III. *Of the properties of the moral law,* 85
Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 92

CHAP. IV. *Of the rules for understanding aright the ten commandments,* - - - 94
Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 103

CHAP. V. *Of the gospel of Christ,* - - - 109
Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 121

CHAP. VI. *Of the uses of the gospel, and of the law in subservience to it,* - - - - 129
SECT. 1. *Of the principal uses of the Gospel,* 130
SECT. 2. *Of the uses of the moral law in subservience to the Gospel,* - - - - - 136
Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 148

CHAP. VII. *Of the difference between the law and the gospel,* - - - - - - - - 156
Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 172

CHAP. VIII. *Of the agreement or harmony between the law and the gospel,* - - - - 177
Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 187

CHAP. IX. *Of the establishment of the law by the gospel,* - - - - - - - - - 192
Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 203

CHAP. X. *Of the believer's privilege of being dead to the law as a covenant of works, with an important consequence of it,* - - 214
SECT. 1. *What it is in the law as a covenant, to which, believers are dead,* - - - - 225
SECT. 2. *Of what is included in the believer's being dead to the law as a covenant* - - 235
SECT. 3. *Of the means of becoming dead to the law as a covenant,* - - - - - - 240

SECT. 4. *Of the important consequence of a believer's being dead to the law as a covenant,* - - - - - - - - - - - - 250

SECT. 5. *Of the necessity of a believer's being dead to the law as a covenant, in order to his living unto God,* - - - - - - - - 259

Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - - 272

CHAP. XI. *Of the high obligations under which believers lie, to yield even perfect obedience to the law as a rule of life,* - - - - - - 284

Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 299

CHAP. XII. *Of the nature, necessity, and desert, of good works,* - - - - - - - - 309

SECT. 1. *Of the nature of good works,* - - 311

SECT. 2. *Of the necessity of good works,* - 317

SECT. 3. *Of the desert of good works,* - - 332

Reflections, - - - - - - - - - - 336

LAW AND GOSPEL.

INTRODUCTION.

THE subject of this Treatise is, in the highest degree, important and interesting, both to saints and to sinners. To know it experimentally, is to "be wise unto salvation;" and to live habitually under the influence of it, is to be at once holy and happy. To have spiritual and distinct views of it, is the way to be kept from verging toward self-righteousness, on the one hand, and licentiousness, on the other; and to be enabled to assert, the absolute freeness of sovereign grace, and at the same time, the sacred interests of true holiness. Without an experimental knowledge, and an unfeigned faith, of the law and the gospel, a man can neither venerate the authority of the one, nor esteem the grace of the other.

The law and the gospel, are the principal parts of Divine Revelation; or rather, they are the centre, the sum, and the substance, of all the other parts of it. Every passage of sacred Scripture, is either law or gospel; or is capable of being referred, either to the one or to the other. Even the Histories of the Old and New Testament, so far as the agency of man is introduced, are but narratives of facts, done in conformity, or in opposition, to the moral law, and done in the belief, or disbelief, of the gospel. The ordinances of the

ceremonial law, given to the ancient Israelites, were, for the most part, grafted on the second and fourth commandments of the moral law; and in their typical reference, were an obscure revelation of the gospel. The precepts of the judicial law, are all reducible to commandments of the moral law, and especially to those of the second table. All threatenings, whether in the Old or in the New Testament, are threatenings either of the law, or of the gospel; and every promise, is a promise either of the one, or of the other. Every prophecy of Scripture, is a declaration of things obscure, or future, connected either with the law or the gospel, or with both. And there is not, in the sacred Volume, one admonition, or reproof, or exhortation, but what refers, either to the law or the gospel, or to both. If then, a man cannot distinguish aright, between the law and the gospel; he cannot rightly understand, so much as a single article of Divine truth. If he have not spiritual and just apprehensions of the holy law, he cannot have spiritual and transforming discoveries of the glorious gospel: and, on the other hand, if his views of the gospel, be erroneous or wrong, his notions of the law, cannot be right.

Besides, if the speculative knowledge, which true believers themselves have, of the law and the gospel, be superficial and indistinct; they will often be in danger of mingling the one with the other. And this, as Luther, in his Commentary on the epistle to the Galatians [a], well observes, 'doth more mischief than man's reason can con-

[a] Page (mihi) 38.

ceive.' If they blend the law with the gospel, or which is the same thing, works with faith, especially in the affair of justification; they will thereby obscure the glory of redeeming grace, and prevent themselves from attaining "joy and peace in believing:" they will, in a greater degree than can be conceived, retard their progress in holiness, as well as in peace and comfort. But on the contrary, if they can distinguish well, between the law and the gospel, they will thereby, under the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit, be able, to discern the *glory* of the whole scheme of redemption; to reconcile all passages of Scripture which appear contrary to each other; to try doctrines whether they be of God; to calm their own consciences, in seasons of mental trouble; and to advance resolutely, in evangelical holiness, and spiritual consolation. In order, then, to assist the humble and devout reader, in studying the law and the gospel, and in learning to distinguish so between them, as to attain those inexpressibly important objects, I shall, in humble dependance on the Spirit of truth, consider,

First, The law of God in general.

Secondly, The law of God, as promulgated to the Israelites, from mount Sinai.

In the third place, The properties of the moral law.

Fourthly, The rules for understanding rightly, the ten commandments.

In the next place, I shall endeavour to explain the gospel.

Then, I shall point out the uses of the gospel, and also of the law in its subservience to the gospel.

Afterward, It will be proper to consider the difference between the law and the gospel.

Next, The agreement between them.

Then, The establishment of the law by the gospel, or the subservience of the gospel, to the authority and honour of the law.

In the next place, The believer's privilege of being dead to the law as a covenant of works, with a necessary consequence of it.

After which, I shall consider the great obligations under which every believer lies, to perform even perfect obedience to the law as a rule of life.

And lastly, The nature, necessity, and desert of good works.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE LAW OF GOD IN GENERAL.

The term *law*, in Scripture, is to be understood, either in an *extended*, or in a *restricted* sense.

In its *extended* or *large* acceptation, it is used sometimes, to signify The five Books of Moses[b]; at other times, All the Books of the Old Testament[c]; sometimes, The whole word of God, in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament[d]; in some places, The Old Testament-dispensation, as distinguished from the New[e]; in others, The Old Testament-dispensation, as including prophe-

[b] Luke xxiv. 44.
[c] John x. 34.
[d] Psal. xix. 7.
[e] John i. 17.

cies, promises, and types of Messiah[f]; and in several, The doctrine of the gospel[g].

In its *restricted* or limited sense, it is employed to express the *rule*, which God has prescribed to his rational creatures; in order to *direct* and *oblige* them, to the right performance of all their duties to him: or, in other words, it is used to signify the declared will of God, directing and obliging mankind, to do that which pleases, and to abstain from that which displeases him.

This, in the strict and proper sense of the word, is the law of God; and it is divided into the *natural*, and the *positive* law. The *natural* law of God, or the law of nature, is that necessary and unchangeable rule of duty, which is founded in the infinitely holy, and righteous *nature* of God; to obey which, all men as the reasonable creatures of God, are, and cannot but be, indispensably bound. The *positive* law of God, comprises those institutions, which depend merely upon his sovereign *will;* and which, he might never have prescribed, and yet his nature have always continued the same; such as, the command not to eat of the forbidden fruit; the command, during the period of the Old Testament-dispensation, to keep holy, as the Sabbath of Jehovah, the *seventh* day of the week, which, under the New Testament, is altered to the first day; the ceremonial law given to the Israelites, which prescribed the rites of God's worship, together with many of the precepts of their judicial law; and the positive precepts concerning the worship of God, under the

[f] Luke xvi. 16. Heb. x. 1.

[g] Isa. ii. 3. and xlii. 4.

gospel. The dictates of God's natural law, are delivered with authority, because they are just and reasonable in their own nature, previous to any Divine precept concerning them; in as much as they are all founded in the infinite holiness, righteousness, and wisdom of his nature[h]. On the contrary, the dictates of his positive law, become just and reasonable, because they are delivered with authority. The former are "holy, and just, and good," and therefore they are commanded: the latter are commanded, and therefore they are "holy, and just, and good." Those commandments of God, which are founded in the holiness and righteousness of his nature, are unalterable, and perpetually the same; whereas, these which are founded on the sovereignty of his will, are in themselves alterable, and *he* may by his own express appointment, alter them whenever he pleases. But till he himself alter them, they continue to be of immutable obligation[i].

Although the *positive* precepts of God, are capable of being changed by himself; yet our obedience to them, is built upon a *moral* foundation. It is a moral duty, a duty of perpetual obligation, to obey in all things the revealed will of God. It was upon a moral ground, that Christ as Mediator proceeded, when he changed the seals of the covenant of grace, altered the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, and instituted new ordinances of worship and of government, for his church: and it is upon the same

[h] Psal. iii. 7, 8. [i] Matth. v. 18.

ground, that we are bound to obey the positive commands of Christ, respecting those ordinances.

The law of God strictly taken, in the aspects which it bears on mankind, is to be considered in a *threefold* point of view; First, as *written on the heart* of man in his creation; Secondly, as given under the form of *a covenant of works* to him; and Lastly, as *a rule of life*, in the hand of Christ the Mediator, to all true believers.

SECT. I. *Of the law, as inscribed on the heart of man in his creation.*

GOD, in creating the first man, made him after his own moral image [k]. This image, as the apostle Paul informs us, consists of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness [l]. God, then, created man in his own moral image, by inscribing his law, the transcript of his own righteousness and holiness, on his mind and heart. The law of God is to be taken, either *materially*, as merely directing and obliging the rational creature to perfect obedience; or *formally*, as having received the form of a covenant of works. Now it is the law, not formally, but *materially* considered, that was inscribed on the heart of man in his creation. Man, therefore, as the creature of God, would have been obliged to perform perfect obedience to the law, in this view of it, though a covenant of works had never been made with him. This law, and sufficient power to obey it, were included in the image of God, according to which he created man [m]. Al-

[k] Gen. i. 27. [l] Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.
[m] Eccles. vii. 29.

though the law in this view of it, contained no *positive* precepts; yet it required man, to believe every thing which God should reveal, and to do every thing which he should command[n].

Since the first man, on whose heart, his Creator had inscribed this law, was not confirmed in rectitude of nature and life, and so was *fallible;* it implied a sanction of *eternal punishment* to him, as the just recompence of his disobedience, if he should at any time transgress it[o]: I say, it *implied* this sanction; for, as it was never designed by God, to be, in that simple form, either a rule of duty to man, or of judgment to himself, and as Adam was not permitted to transgress, till *after* the covenant of works was made with him, there does not seem to have been any *express* threatening of eternal punishment, annexed to it. But though it implied a penal sanction, and though disobedience to it, would deserve even eternal death; yet there is no ground from the Scripture to conclude, that a penal sanction, or a threatening of eternal wrath, is *inseparable* from it. For glorified saints and confirmed angels in heaven, are all naturally, necessarily, and eternally, bound to perform perfect obedience to it, as the law of creation; but to affirm, that *they* have a threatening of eternal punishment, annexed to it, would be rash and unscriptural. The truth is, There is no place for a penal sanction, where there cannot be a possibility of sinning. Besides, if a threatening of eternal punishment, were inseparable from the law of creation; true believers, who are and who always must be,

[n] Deut. xii. 32. [o] Rom. i. 32. and vi. 23.

under this law, should inevitably remain under that threatening. Although their justification, for the righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith and imputed by God, is perfect and irrevocable; yet if, even in that state, they committed but a single sin, it would lay them afresh under condemnation to eternal wrath; contrary to these consoling passages of Scripture: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation[p]." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit[q]." Indeed, if a penal sanction were inseparable from the law of creation, believers should at once, be both justified and condemned. For as all men, considered as creatures of God, are subject to the law of creation[r]; so this law cannot but forbid the smallest degree of sin, and cannot but require perfection of obedience, from all believers, as well as from all unbelievers.—It may be proper here to remark, that, no mere man, even by perfect obedience to the law in that simple form, could ever have *merited* from God, *eternal life*. It therefore implied *no promise* of eternal life, and even no promise, that mankind should ever be confirmed under it as a rule of life. It was only, when it received the form of the covenant of works, that a promise of life eternal, and consequently, of confirmation in holiness and happiness, was annexed to it.

The law, as written on the heart of the first man, is often styled *the law of creation;* because it was

[p] John v. 24. [q] Rom. viii. 1. [r] Rom. ii. 15.

the will of the sovereign Creator, revealed to the reasonable creature, by impressing or engraving it, on his mind and heart. To this law, so inlaid in the mind and heart in creation, as to the natural instinct, and moral rectitude, of the rational creature, every person, as a reasonable creature, is indispensably bound. It obliges to perfect and perpetual obedience, in all possible states of the creature; whether he be on earth, or in heaven, or even in hell. Since man is the creature of God, and since, in his creation, he was made in the image of God, he owes all possible subjection and obedience to God, considered as his benign Creator.

The same law, is also denominated *the law of nature;* because it was founded in the holy and righteous nature of God, and was interwoven with the nature of the first man; because it corresponds, both to the nature of God who is the author of it, and to that of man who is subjected to it; because to act according to this law, is the same as to act naturally and reasonably; because the writing of it on the heart of Adam, was so distinct, and the impression of it on his nature, was so deep, that they were equal to an express revelation of it; because the dictates of this law are the very same, that the dictates of natural conscience in the first man, were; and, because the obligation to perform perfect obedience to it, proceeds from the nature of God, and lies on the nature of man. The knowledge, which man in innocence had, of this law, was concreated with his nature.

It is sometimes called *the moral law;* and it is so called, because it was a revelation of the will of

God as his moral Governor, to the first man, and was the standard and rule of all the man's moral qualities and actions; because, whilst it was manifested to his reason, it represented to him, the moral fitness of all his holy inclinations, thoughts, words and actions; because, whilst it regulates the manners or morals of all men, it is of perpetual obligation; and because, it is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, which are usually styled the moral law. The ten commandments, are the sum and substance of it. There is, however, this difference between it and them: in it, there is nothing but what is moral; but in them, there is something that is positive.

The *obligation* of the law of nature, results both from the nature of God and the nature of man; and from the relation between God, the Creator, proprietor, preserver, benefactor, and governor of man, and man, the creature, the property, and the subject of God. The *immediate ground* of the obligation of the natural law, upon man, is the sovereign *authority* of God, or his absolute right to command the perfect obedience of man. This sovereign authority of the Lord, flows from the infinite supereminence, or supreme excellence, of his nature, above the nature of man; from his being the Creator of man, and man's being his creature; from his being the Preserver, and Benefactor of man, and man's being dependent upon him, for life and all the comforts of life; and from his being, therefore, the sole Proprietor, and the sovereign Ruler of man, and man's being his property, and in absolute subjection to him. The obligation of the natural law upon mankind, then, as resulting from the nature of

God, and from the relations between God and man, is such, that even God himself cannot dispense with it. It cannot cease to bind, so long as God continues to be God, and man to be man; God, to be the sovereign Creator, and man, to be his dependent creature. Since the authority of that law is Divine, the obligation flowing from it, is eternal and immutable. It must continue for ever, without the smallest diminution; and that, upon all men, whether saints or sinners; at all times from the moment of man's creation, before the covenant of works, under the covenant of works, under the covenant of grace, and even through all eternity. Man has no being, no life, no activity, without God. So long, therefore, as man continues in existence, he is bound to have no being but *for* God, and no activity but such as is according to *his will.*

That fair copy of the natural law, which had been transcribed into the nature of the first man in his creation, was, by the fall, *much obliterated;* and it continues still to be, in a great degree, defaced and even obliterated, in the minds of all his unregenerate offspring. And, indeed, if it was not in a great measure obliterated, what need could there be, of inscribing it anew, on the hearts of the elect? What occasion for such a promise as this; "I will *put* my laws into their mind, and *write* them in their hearts[s]?" What necessity could there be, of writing it in the sacred Volume, in order to make it known to men, in all their generations? Indeed, so obliterated was it, that the Lord saw it necessary to make it known to his people, both by external,

[s] Heb. viii. 10. and x. 16.

and internal revelation. But, although this natural law, inscribed on the heart of Adam, was much defaced by the fall; yet it was not *wholly* obliterated. Some faint impressions, or small relics of it, remain still in the minds of all men. Indeed, with respect to its general principles, and the immediate conclusions obviously deducible from them, it is not, and it cannot be *totally* effaced; but with regard to such conclusions as are more or less remote, it is, by the darkness of the mind, and the depravity of the heart of man, wholly perverted[t]. The general principles, which, in some measure, are still inscribed on the minds of men, even where they have not the benefit of the written law, are such as these: That there is a God; That God is to be worshipped; That none is to be injured; That parents ought to be honoured; That we should do to others, what we would reasonably wish, that they would do to us, &c. That such general principles as these, are still in some degree, engraven on the minds of all men, is evident from these words of an Apostle: "The Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another[u]." The same is also manifest from the laws, which, in countries destitute of the light of Revelation, are commonly enacted, for encouraging virtue and discouraging vice, and for preserving the rights of civil society. Men in heathen countries, can have no standard

[t] Rom. i. 21, 32.

[u] Rom. ii. 14, 15.

for those laws, but the relics of the natural law, which all the descendants of Adam, bring with them into the world.

The remains of the law of nature, in the minds of men, are commonly styled, the *light of nature*, and sometimes, the light of reason. They are the dictates of natural conscience; and they contain those moral principles, respecting good and evil, which have essential equity in them. The *law* of nature, as engraven on the heart of Adam in his creation, should always be distinguished from the *light* of nature, as now enjoyed. The former is uniform and stable, of universal extent, and of perpetual obligation: the latter, being that knowledge of the nature of God, and of their own nature, as well as of the duties resulting from the relations between them, which men since the fall actually possess, is greatly diversified in its extent and degree, according to their different opportunities, capacities, and dispositions. In some parts of the world, where the light of nature is not assisted by the light of Revelation, it appears not much superior to the sagacity of some of the inferior creatures. How far then must it be, from being sufficient, to guide men to true virtue and happiness; or to afford them, in their present depraved state, *proper views* of the wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy of God!

So much for the law of nature, which is the law of God, in its primitive, simple, and absolute form.

SECT. II. *Of the law as given, under the form of THE COVENANT OF WORKS, to Adam.*

THE law of creation, or of the ten commandments, was, in the form of a *covenant of works*, given to the first Adam, after he had been put into the garden of Eden; and it was given him, as the first parent, and the federal representative, of all his posterity by ordinary generation. An *express threatening* of death, and a *gracious promise* of life, annexed to the law of creation, made it to Adam, a covenant of works, *proposed;* and his consent, which he as a sinless creature, could not refuse, made it a covenant of works, *accepted.* As formed into a covenant of works, it is called by the apostle Paul, The law of works [u], that is, the law as a covenant of works. It requires works or perfect obedience, on pain of death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal; and it promises to the man who performs perfect and personal obedience, life, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. In the law, under the form of a covenant of works, then, three things are presented to our consideration; a *precept*, a *promise*, and a *penal sanction.*

1. A *precept*, requiring perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, as the condition of eternal life. The law of creation, requires man to perform perfect obedience, and says Do: but the law as a covenant of works, requires him to Do and LIVE; to do, as the condition of life; to do, in order to acquire by his obedience, a title to life eternal. The command, to perform perfect obedi-

[u] Rom. iii. 27.

ence *merely*, is not the covenant of works; for man was, and is, immutably and eternally bound to yield perfect obedience to the law of creation, though a covenant of works, had never been made with him: but the form of the command, in the covenant of works, is,—perfect obedience as *the condition of life*. The law in this form, comprised, not only all the commandments peculiar to it as the law of nature; but also a positive precept, which depended entirely on the *will* of God. "The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die[x]." This positive precept was, in effect, a summary of all the commands of the natural or moral law: obedience to it, included obedience to them all, and disobedience to it, was a transgression of them all at once. The covenant of works, accordingly, could not have been broken otherwise, than by transgressing that positive precept. The command, requiring perfect obedience as the condition of life, bound Adam and all his natural posterity in him, not only by the authority of God his sovereign Lord and Creator, but by his own voluntary consent, to perform that obedience.

The natural law, given in the form of a covenant of works, to Adam and all his natural descendants, required them to *believe* whatever the Lord should reveal or promise, and to *do* whatever he should command. All Divine precepts,

[x] Gen. ii. 16, 17.

therefore, are virtually and really comprehended in it. "The law of the Lord is *perfect*[y]." But if any instance of duty, owing by man to God, in any age of the church, were not either directly or indirectly commanded in it, it would not be a *perfect* law. But since it *is* perfect, all duties, and among others, the duties of believing, and repenting of sin, are virtually commanded in it; they are required in its first commandment[z]. Adam it is true, was not actually obliged by it to believe in a Redeemer, till, after that he had sinned, a Redeemer was revealed to him. But the same command, that required him to believe and trust the promise of God his Creator, required him also to believe in God his Redeemer, as soon as He should be revealed and offered to him. Nor was Adam required to repent of sin, before sin was committed. But the same law, that obliged him to abhor, watch against, and abstain from all appearance of evil; bound him also to bewail and forsake sin, whenever he found that he was guilty of it. Since the holy law is a perfect rule of all internal, as well as external obedience, it cannot but require faith and repentance, as well as all other duties. Without them, no other performances can please God[a]. Our blessed Lord informs us, That faith is one of "the weighter matters of the law[b];" and the apostle Paul, "That whatsoever is not of faith is sin[c]." Unbelief, which is a departing from the living God, is evidently forbidden in the first commandment of the law. Faith, then, as I

[y] Psal. xix. 7. [z] See Larger Cat. Quest. 104.
[a] Heb. xi. 6. [b] Matth. xxiii. 23. [c] Rom. xiv. 23.

said already, is required in the same command [d]. And with regard to repentance, though neither the covenant of works, nor that of grace, admits of it, as any atonement for sin, or any ground of title to life; yet, on the supposition that sin has been committed, it is a duty enjoined in the first, and, indeed, in every other precept of the moral law.

Although the law in its covenant-form, requires of all who are under it since the fall, perfect obedience as the condition of life, and full satisfaction for sin, in their *own persons;* and, at the same time, upon the revelation and offer of Christ, in the gospel, as Jehovah our Righteousness, commands them to *believe in Him* as such; yet, as is the case in various other instances of duty, it requires the one of these, only on supposition that the other is *not performed.* The law as a covenant of works, requires that all who are under it, do present to it, as the conditions of eternal life, perfect obedience, and complete satisfaction for sin, *either* in their own persons, *or* in that of a responsible surety. So long then as a sinner, unwilling to be convinced of his sin, and of his want of righteousness, cleaves to the law as a covenant, and refuses to accept, and present in the hand of faith, to it, the spotless righteousness of the adorable Surety;—that sinner continues "a debtor to do the whole law [e]:" he keeps himself under an obligation to do, in his *own* person, all that the law in that form requires, and also to suffer all that it threatens. The righteous law, accordingly, goes on to use him as he deserves. It continues to proceed against him, without the smal-

[d] Isa. xxvi. 4. and 1 John iii. 23. [e] Gal. v. 3.

lest abatement of its high demands; requiring of him, the complete payment of his debt, both of perfect obedience, and of infinite satisfaction for his disobedience. As it accepts of no obedience, but that which is absolutely perfect, or fully answerable to all its demands [f]; so the acceptance of a man's person as righteous, *according to it*, will depend on the acceptance of his obedience [g].

In consequence of God's having proposed the law in its covenant-form, to Adam, and of Adam's having, as the representative of all his natural descendants, consented to it; all the children of men, while they continue in their natural state, *remain firmly*, in the sight of God, under the *whole* original obligation of it: even those of them, who, as members of the visible church, are under an external dispensation of the covenant of grace, remain under all its obligation [h]. For though the law in its covenant-form, is broken; yet, it is far from being *repealed*, or set aside. The obligation of this covenant, continues in all its force, in time and through eternity, upon every sinner who is not released from it, by God the other Party. The awful consequence is, that every unregenerate sinner is bound, at once to perform perfect obedience, and also to endure the full execution of the penal sanction. The preceptive part of that Divine contract, continues to bind, both by its original authority, and by man's consent to it; which consent is no more his, to recall, unless he be freed from his obligation, by the other contracting Party. And now that

[f] Gal. iii. 10, 11. [g] Matth. v. 18. Rom. x. 5.
[h] Rom. ix. 31, 32.

the curse of the covenant, is, in consequence of transgression, become *absolute*, it binds as strongly as even the precept. The law then as a covenant of works, does, in the most authoritative manner, demand from every descendant of Adam who is under it,—perfect holiness of nature, perfect righteousness of life, and complete satisfaction for sin: and none of the race of fallen Adam, can ever enter heaven, unless he, either answer these three demands perfectly in his own person, or accept by faith, the consummate righteousness of the second Adam, who "is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth [i]."

2. In the law as a covenant of works, there is also *a promise;* a gracious promise of the continuance of spiritual and temporal life, and in due time, of eternal life. This promise, which flowed solely from infinite benignity and condescension in God, was made, and was to have been fulfilled, to Adam and all his natural posterity, on condition that he as their representative, perfectly obeyed the precept. That a promise of life, was made to the first Adam, and to all his natural descendants in him, on condition of his perfect obedience, during the time of his probation, is evident; for the Lord Jesus saith, "If thou wilt enter into *life*, keep the commandments [k]." And again, "This do and thou shalt *live* [l]." The apostle Paul also says, "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things, shall live by them [m]." The promise of life, to Adam

[i] Rom. x. 4.
[k] Matth. xix. 17.
[l] Luke x. 28.
[m] Rom. x. 5.

as the representative of his posterity, was implied in the threatening of death. When the Lord said to him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die[n];" it implied, 'If thou eat not of it, thou shalt surely live.' Besides, the tree of life, which was one of the seals of that covenant, serves to evince the same thing. It sealed the promise of life to Adam, so long as he continued to perform perfect obedience.

It is evident that, the infinitely great and sovereign Creator, could be under no obligations to man, the creature of his power, but such as arose from the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, of his own nature. It was therefore free to him, whether he would still by absolute authority, command man to obey him, or enter into a covenant with man for that purpose; whether after perfect obedience to his law, he would give man eternal life, or annihilate him; and whether if it should please him to give it, he would bestow it on condition of man's obedience, or make a free grant of it to him, and confirm him in the eternal enjoyment of it, as he has done elect angels. It depended solely upon the *will* of God, whether there should be a covenant at all, containing a promise of eternal life to man, and if a promise of it, whether that promise should be absolute, or conditional. The promise of eternal life, upon man's perfect obedience, then, flowed entirely from the good pleasure, and free grace of God. Had Adam fulfilled the condition of life in the first covenant, the Lord, instead of having been a debtor to him for his obedience,

[n] Gen. ii. 17.

would have been a debtor only, to his own grace and faithfulness in the promise. It is manifest, then, that there could have been *no real merit*, in the perfect obedience of man, nor so much as the smallest proportion between it, and the promised reward. Although Adam had performed the condition of that covenant, he could not have expected eternal life upon any ground except this; that God had graciously *promised it* on that condition.

The *peculiar form* of the covenant of works, or that which distinguishes it from every other contract, does not consist in the connection between the precept and the promise; but, in the *manner* of that connection. Obedience to the precept, is made to give *a pactional title* to the life promised. Eternal life is made so to depend on personal and perfect obedience, that without this obedience, that life cannot be obtained; it cannot be claimed on any other ground. But if the obedience be performed, the life promised becomes due, in virtue of the covenant. This being the manner of the connection, between the precept and the promise, of the first covenant; when this covenant was broken, that connection was as far as ever, from being dissolved. Eternal life, according to the covenant, will still follow upon perfect, personal, and continual obedience. It still continues true, "That the man who doeth those things shall *live* by them." But since no such thing as perfect obedience, is to be found now, among any of the sons of men; no man can have a title to life, according to the promise of that covenant. Thus, the law has become weak, not by any change in itself; but because men have not yielded perfect obedience to it. The

reason, why it cannot now justify a man in the sight of God, or satisfy him with eternal life, is, because he cannot satisfy it, with personal and perfect obedience.

Although eternal life was, in the covenant of works, promised to Adam and his posterity, on condition of his *perfect* obedience, and that only; yet, a man is to be counted a legalist, or self-righteous, if, whilst he does not pretend that his obedience is perfect, he yet relies on it for a title to life. Self-righteous men have, in all ages, set aside, as impossible to be fulfilled by them, that condition of the covenant of works, which God had imposed on Adam, and have framed for themselves, various models of that covenant; which, though they are far from being institutions of God, and stand upon terms lower than perfect obedience, yet are of the nature of the covenant of works. The unbelieving Jews, who sought righteousness by the works of the law, were not so very ignorant, or presumptuous, as to pretend to *perfect* obedience. Neither did those professed Christians in Galatia, who desired to be under the law, and to be justified by the law, of whom the Apostle therefore testified, that they had "fallen from grace[o]," presume to plead that they could yield perfect obedience. On the contrary, their public profession of Christianity shewed, that they had some sense of their need of Christ's righteousness. But their great error was this: they did not believe, that the righteousness of Jesus Christ *alone*, was sufficient to entitle them to the justification of life; and therefore they depended,

[o] Gal. v. 4.

for justification, partly on their own obedience to the moral, and to the ceremonial law. It was this, and not their pretensions to perfect obedience, that the Apostle had in view, when he blamed them for cleaving to the law of works, and for expecting justification by the works of the law. By relying, for justification, partly on their own works of obedience to the moral and ceremonial laws, they, as the Apostle informed them, were "fallen from grace; Christ was become of no effect to them;" and they were "debtors to do the whole law[p]." By depending, for justification, partly on their imperfect obedience to the law, they framed the law into a covenant of works, and such a covenant of works too, as could admit of *imperfect*, instead of perfect works; and by relying, partly on the righteousness of Christ, they mingled the law with the gospel, and works with faith, in the affair of justification. Thus, they perverted both the law and the gospel, and formed them for themselves, into a motley covenant of works. The great design of our Apostle, then, was to draw them off from their false views of the law; to direct them to right conceptions of it in its covenant-form, in which, it can admit of no personal obedience as a condition of life, but such as is perfect; and so, to destroy their legal hope, as well as to confute their wrong notions. By the reasonings of the Apostle upon this subject, it is manifest that, every evangelical, as well as every legal work of ours, is excluded from forming even the smallest part, of a man's righteousness for justification in the sight of God. It is evident

[p] Gal. v. 3, 4.

that, even faith itself as a man's act or work, and so, comprised in the works of the law, is thereby excluded from being any part of his justifying righteousness [q]. It is one thing, to be justified *by* faith, merely as an instrument by which, a man receives the righteousness of Christ; and another, to be justified *for* faith, as an act or work of the law. If a sinner, then, rely on his actings of faith, or works of obedience to any of the commands of the law, for a title to eternal life; he seeks to be justified by the works of the law, as really as if his works were perfect. If he depend, either in whole or in part, on his faith and repentance, for a right to any promised blessing; he thereby, so annexes that promise to the commands to believe and repent, as to form them for himself, into a covenant of works. Building his confidence before God, upon his faith, repentance, and other acts of obedience to the law, he places them in Christ's stead, as his grounds of right to the promise; and so, he demonstrates himself to be of the works of the law, and to be under the curse [r].

3. Lastly, In the law as a covenant of works, there is, moreover, a *penal sanction*, an express threatening of death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. This dreadful threatening was annexed to the positive precept, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as comprehending all the precepts of the natural or moral law. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of that: for in the day that thou eatest there-

[q] See Confess. Chap. xi. art. 1. [r] Gal. iii. 10.

of, thou shalt surely die[s]." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die[t]." Seeing the natural law was promulgated to Adam, who though a holy, was yet a mutable creature, liable to fall away from God; not only was a promise of eternal life, in case of obedience, but a threatening of eternal death, in case of disobedience, superadded to it. Thus, it was turned into a covenant or law of works, of which, the law of the ten commandments was, and is still, the matter. Accordingly, in its covenant-form, it not only says to every man who is under it, 'Do and live,' but, '*Do* or *die;* Do, on pain of death in all its dreadful extent.' This law of works has a *twofold* power; a power to justify persons, if they yield perfect obedience, and a power to condemn them, if in the smallest instance they disobey. It said to Adam, and it says to every descendant of Adam, 'If thou offend but in one instance, dying thou shalt die.' It is to every sinner, the ministration of condemnation and of death. That awful sanction is founded in the *justice* of God, and is as much according to his mind and will, as the precept of the law itself. His mind and will are unchangeable; consequently, no sooner did man become a sinner, than he became subject to the first and to the second death, which, Divine justice and faithfulness were bound to see inflicted upon him. One single transgression, has forever cut him off from all possibility of attaining life by the law. And since all have sinned, consequently, "by the works of the law, shall no flesh living be justified." The law of works has pronounced all the race of

[s] Gen. ii. 17. [t] Ezek. xviii. 4.

Adam guilty, has condemned them to eternal punishment, and has not made the smallest provision for their deliverance.

That penal sanction, annexed to the law of the covenant, was most *reasonable*. There were indeed many other motives, which might have induced Adam to continue obedient. But as he was naturally a mutable creature, and as yet, was only in a state of probation, his Creator had sufficient reason to be jealous of him. The Lord, therefore, in order to guard his grace and condescension, from being despised and trampled on, annexed such a penalty to his righteous law, as, if duly considered, should serve to terrify man from violating his gracious covenant. Death, especially spiritual and eternal death, could not but appear to Adam, whose knowledge and holiness were perfect, to be of all objects, the most horrible. Nothing could appear better calculated, to deter him from transgressing the covenant, than the awful consideration that, as he was already bound by the precept, to perform perfect obedience, so he should, if he disobeyed, be as firmly bound by the curse, to suffer endless punishment. Besides, the punishment of death, in all its dreadful extent and duration, is no more, than the smallest sin against the *infinite* Majesty of heaven, justly deserves. It is due to the sinner; and immutable justice requires, that every man should have all that is due to him. "The wages of sin is death [u]."

It is evident, then, that the promise of life in case of obedience, and the denunciation of death in the

[u] Rom. vi. 23.

event of disobedience, annexed to the law of creation, made it to Adam, a covenant of works proposed. Nothing further was necessary, to complete this covenant with him, as the head and representative of his natural posterity, than his consent to each of those articles. Since he was created in the image of God, he could not but discern clearly, the equity and advantage of that Divine covenant, and so approve and consent to it. His consenting to it, accordingly, is hinted in these words of Eve to the serpent; "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die[w]." Adam then consented to the precept, promise, and threatening, of the first covenant. And in his consent to it, as well as in God's approbation of the tenor of it, the *formal obligation* of it consisted; so far as that was superadded to the previous obligations, under which he lay, by the law of creation. In consenting to the precept, he bound himself to perfect obedience, as the condition of eternal life to himself and his posterity; as well as, to believe whatever God should afterwards reveal, and to do whatever he should command. By consenting to the promise, he agreed that, he would have eternal life on no other condition, than that of personal and perfect obedience; and that, he would never have eternal life, unless he performed and persevered in, such obedience. In consenting to the threatening, in case of disobedience, he bound himself to renounce,

[w] Gen. iii 2, 3.

in that event, all his pretensions to life by that covenant; and he obliged himself, to suffer the full execution of the penalty denounced. By thus approving, and consenting to, that proposed contract, the form of it was *completed*; and the obligations of it became *so firm*, that the one contracting party could not retract, without the consent of the other.

Since Adam, in consenting to the *penal sanction* of the first covenant, bound himself and his natural posterity never to have eternal life, but on condition of his perfect obedience; and since he failed of this obedience, and so fell, with all his natural descendants, under the begun execution of the penalty;—no sinner under that broken covenant, is bound by it, to *seek* eternal life by his own performances. The penalty of the covenant, to which Adam, as the representative of his posterity consented, is, by his transgression, now become *absolute*; and it binds the unregenerate sinner as firmly, as the precept itself does. Instead, then, of obliging him to seek eternal life for his obedience, it binds him to suffer eternal death for his disobedience. His consent, in the first Adam, to the penalty, he is not at liberty to recall, except he be released by God the other contracting Party. He is therefore as firmly bound, according to the constitution of the covenant, to endure the full execution of the penalty, unless God himself deliver him from it, as, to yield perfect obedience to the command. The curse of the law is so bound upon him, that it would be a second breach of the covenant, to seek to elude the execution of it, so long as he desires to continue under that covenant. But to seek eternal life by his own righteousness, is to try to

clude that execution. No obligation therefore lies on a sinner, under the covenant of works, to seek eternal life for his own obedience: on the contrary, it is utterly unlawful for him to attempt this. That very contract, which afforded man while innocent, a prospect of life, now that he is guilty, debars him from all expectation of it. The covenant of works, left innocent man at liberty to *expect* life, upon his perfect obedience, but did not oblige him to seek it, on that ground; but only on the ground of the faithfulness of God in the promise, in which, he graciously annexed eternal life to perfect obedience[x]. And, if it did not oblige innocent man to seek life, on the ground even of *perfect* obedience; how can it bind guilty man to seek it, on the account of *imperfect* obedience? The law as a covenant, indeed, leaves the sinner at liberty, nay, it commands him, to receive the righteousness of the second Adam, offered to him in the gospel, and to seek, as well as to expect, eternal life, on the ground of this consummate righteousness: but so long as he continues to reject this righteousness, the law continues its obligation on him, both to perform perfect obedience, and to suffer the infinite execution of the curse. The connexion established by the covenant, between perfect obedience and life, and between the smallest instance of disobedience and death, is immutable and eternal. And therefore, no sinner can otherwise be delivered from the bond of that covenant, than by receiving and presenting to the law of it, the perfect and glorious righteousness of the second Adam, which answers

[x] Matth. xix. 16, 17.

fully all its high demands [y]. If he labour to escape the death threatened, and to procure the life promised in it, by his own righteousness; his labour is to no purpose, but to increase his guilt, and to aggravate his condemnation [z].

Before I conclude this Section, it may be proper to remark, That the moral law, in the revelation which is given of it in Scripture, is almost constantly set forth to us, in its *covenant-form*, as proposed to the first Adam. And it appears, that the infinitely wise and holy Lord God, hath left it on record in that form; in order that sinners of mankind might be convinced by it, not only of their sinfulness and misery under the dominion of it, but of the utter impossibility of their ever obtaining justification and eternal life, by any righteousness of their own [a].

SECT. III. *Of the law, in the hand of Christ the blessed Mediator, as A RULE OF LIFE to all true believers.*

THE authority and obligation of the law of nature, which is the same as the law of the ten commandments, being founded in the nature of God, the almighty Creator and sovereign Ruler of men, are *necessary*, *immutable*, and *eternal*. They were the same, before the law received the form of a covenant of works, that they are, after it has received this form, and that they are, and will continue to be, after it has dropped this form. It is divested of its covenant-form, to all who are vitally

[y] Rom. x. 4. and vii. 6.
[z] Rom. ix. 30—32.
[a] Rom. iii. 20.

united to the last Adam, who have communion with him in his righteousness, and who are instated in the covenant of grace. But though it is to them, wholly denuded of its covenant-form, yet it has lost nothing of its original authority and obligation. Now that, it is taken in under the covenant of grace, and made the instrument of government, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, it retains all the authority over believers, that, as a covenant of works, it has over unregenerate sinners. It is given to believers, as a rule to *direct* them, and as an authoritative law to *bind* them, to holy obedience. It has the sovereign and infinite authority of Jehovah, as a Creator, as well as a Redeemer, to afford it binding force. His nature is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably holy; and therefore his law, which is a transcript of his holiness, must retain invariably and eternally, all its original authority [b]. The law as a rule, then, is not a new preceptive law, but the old law which was from the beginning, issuing to believers, under a new form.

This law issues to true Christians, from *Christ*, the glorious Mediator of the new covenant, and from *God*, as their Creator, Proprietor, Benefactor, and covenant-God. It proceeds *immediately from Jesus Christ*, the blessed Mediator between God and men. It is taken in under the covenant of grace, and, in the hand of Christ the Mediator of that covenant, it is given to all who believe in him, and who are justified by faith, as the *only rule* of their obedience. The apostle Paul accordingly

[b] Lev. xi. 44. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

styles it, "The law of Christ[c]." It is a law, which Christ has clearly explained, and which he has vindicated from the false glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees; his new commandment, which he has given, and enforced by his own example; and whose obligation on the subjects of his spiritual kingdom, he has increased by his redemption of them, from their bondage to sin and Satan. It is a law, which he, according to the promise of his gracious covenant, inscribes, by his Holy Spirit, on their hearts; a law too, which he styles his yoke, and which, in comparison of the law of works, is a light and easy yoke[d]. While the law as a rule of life to believers, is issued forth immediately from Christ to them, it proceeds, at the same time, from *God*, as their sovereign Lord, their Creator, Proprietor, and covenant-God in him. God the Father saith concerning Messiah, "Behold, I have GIVEN HIM for a witness to the people, a leader and *commander* to the people[e]." All the sovereign authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is, according to the everlasting covenant, vested in Him, as God-man, Mediator, and King of Zion. In Exodus xxiii. 21. Jehovah gives this solemn charge to the Israelites, in reference to Messiah, the uncreated Angel of the covenant:—"Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for MY NAME is in him;" as if he had said, 'My essence, my sovereignty, my authority, my law, are in him, yea, all the fulness of the God-head is in him; and in him *only* will obedience to my law, be acceptable to me." The name

[c] Gal. vi. 2. [d] Matth. xi. 29, 30. [e] Isa. lv. 4.

of the Father is so in him, that his voice in the law, is the Father's voice; for it follows in the 22d verse, "But if thou shalt indeed obey HIS VOICE, and do all that I SPEAK." To the same purpose, the apostle Paul said of himself, That he was "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ[f]." To be not without law to God, can mean no less than, to be under the law of God. Therefore, to be under the law of Christ, is the *same* as to be under the law of God. Believers, by being under the law as a rule in the hand of Christ, or which is the same thing, by being under the law to Christ, are under the law of God. When they are under the law of the ten commandments, as the law of Christ, they are under it, as enforced by all the sovereign authority of God. The original authority of the moral law, is not in the smallest degree lessened, by the believer's reception of it, not as the law or covenant of works, but as the law of Christ, standing in the covenant of grace. Its original obligation, proceeding from the infinite authority of the adorable Trinity, is *inseparable* from it, and cannot possibly be in the least impaired, by its being conveyed to believers, by and from the Lord Jesus. For He, equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is, in his Divine nature, the eternal Jehovah, "the Most High over all the earth." He is God over all, and the Creator of "all things that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible[g]." He is also "in the Father, and the Father is in him[h]." As God's authority to judge, is not less-

[f] 1 Cor. ix. 21. [g] Col. i. 16. [h] John xiv. 11.

ened, by his having committed all judgment to the Son; so his authority to command, is not, and cannot be, in the least diminished, by his having given Christ "for a commander to the people."

That the holy law of God should be given to believers, in and through the Mediator, and *not immediately by God himself, is necessary.* When the Divine law was at first given to man, he was the *friend* of God; and so, he could receive the law immediately from him, in a manner consistent, both with the honour of God, and the safety of his own soul. But now, that man has sinned against the Lord, and has become an object of his infinite wrath, and that God hath assumed the character of an offended Sovereign, and an avenging Judge; now, that the law as a covenant of works, is become the dreadful instrument of Divine indignation, on account of sin; the guilty sinner cannot regard either God, or his righteous law, but as an object of the greatest terror to him. It was requisite, then, that a Mediator should interpose, both between the offended Lawgiver, and the sinner, and also between the violated law, and the sinner; who, by satisfying the justice of the one, and by answering the demands of the other, might obtain free access, for the guilty criminal, to both. Out of Christ the blessed Mediator, an holy God cannot, with the safety of his honour, have any dealing with a sinful creature; but, in and by Christ, he can, consistently with his own infinite honour, and that of his holy law, issue forth his commandments to believers, and receive their sincere obedience. Accordingly, the great Mediator, having admitted believers to communion with him-

self, in his surety-righteousness, writes by his Spirit the law on their hearts, and, in his Father's name, makes it the instrument of his government of them, and the rule of their duty to him. And, as the same law is called, the law of nature, because in his creation, it was inlaid in the nature of the first man; so it may be styled, the law of renewed nature, because, in the hand of Christ, and as standing under the covenant of grace, it is interwoven with the new nature of all, who are "created again in him to good works." Since it is only in Christ, then, that the offended Majesty of heaven, can give his holy law to a sinner, and that a sinner can, with safety, receive and obey such a law; it may well be called, "the law of Christ." Considered as the law of Christ's justified, sanctified, and peculiar people, it is not the law of an absolute God, or of God out of Christ, but the law of God *in* Christ. Were believers to keep the moral law, only as the law of *nature*, and without any relation to the Mediator, their obedience would be but *natural religion:* were they to obey it merely as a covenant of works, their obedience would be but *legal righteousness;* but when they obey it, in its relation to Christ and the covenant of grace, their conformity of heart and life to it, is *true holiness*, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ[1].

The *precepts* of the law as a rule of life to true Christians, are the same with those of the law as a covenant of works, and they require the *same perfection* of obedience. The ten commandments are the precepts of the Divine law, both as a cove-

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

nant of works to the unregenerate, and as a rule of duty to the saints. But while they are issued to believers, with all the sovereign authority that originally belonged to them, the obligations under which believers lie, to yield obedience to them, are greatly increased, by the grace of the Redeemer, and the mercies of redemption. If the saints are obliged as creatures, they are still more firmly bound as *new* creatures, to keep those commandments. If they were formerly, under firm obligations to obey them in their covenant-form, as the precepts of God out of Christ; they are now, under additional obligations to yield obedience to them, as the commands of God, as their own God and Father in Christ. Does the *grace* displayed in the first covenant, oblige all who are under that covenant, to perform perfect obedience? The exceeding riches of grace in the second covenant, lay all who are instated in it, under additional ties to give perfect obedience. If sinners under the covenant of works, be bound to yield perfect obedience *for* life; believers within the bond of the covenant of grace are under still higher obligations to perform perfect obedience *from* life, and for the glory of Him who, by fulfilling all the righteousness of the law in its covenant-form, has merited eternal life for them. The law as a rule, then, enforced by all the sovereign authority of God, both as Creator and Redeemer, requires believers to perform, not sincere only, but perfect and perpetual obedience. The great Redeemer gives this high command to all his redeemed: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which

is in heaven is perfect[k]." Accordingly, real believers, instead of resting satisfied with *sincere* obedience to that law, consider their want of absolute perfection in obedience, as their sin, and bewail it as such.

True Christians and *none else*, are under the law as a rule, in the hand of Christ. The apostle Paul exhorted the brethren in the Churches of Galatia, thus: "Bear *ye* one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ[l]." The endearing relations, in which, believers stand to Christ and to God in him, as well as the inestimable blessings of salvation conferred on them, and the exceeding great and precious promises given them; do all require and enforce their obligation, to abound in holy obedience to the law as a rule[m]. Believers, before the incarnation of Christ, were as much under the binding force of it, as believers now are[n].

The great *design* of God, in giving this law in the hand of Christ to his people, is *not*, that by their obedience to it, they may procure for themselves, a right to eternal life; but, that it may *direct* and *oblige* them, to walk worthy of their union with Christ, of their justification in him, of their legal title to, and begun possession of life eternal, and of God himself as their God in him. Their conformity of heart and life, to its commands, instead of procuring their title to salvation, is a principal *part* of their salvation already begun, and a necessary preparative for the consummation of it, through eternity[o]. The law as a rule of life to

[k] Matth. v. 48. [l] Gal. vi. 2.
[m] 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 9. Tit. ii. 11—14. 2 Cor. vii. 1.
[n] Luke i. 73—75. [o] Heb. xii. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

believers, especially in this view of it, is very different from the law as a covenant of works. The precept of the law as a covenant, is, 'Do and live;' but the command of the law as a rule, is, 'Live and do:' the law of works says, 'Do, or thou shalt be condemned to die;' but the law, in the hand of Christ, says, 'Thou art delivered from condemation, therefore do:' the command of the former, is, 'Do perfectly, that thou mayest have a right to eternal life;' but that of the latter is, 'Thou already hast the begun possession of eternal life, as well as the promise of the complete possession of it, therefore do in such a manner, as to advance daily toward perfection:' by that, a man is commanded to do, in his own strength; but by this, he is required to do, in the strength that is in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus says to every believer, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness, therefore do." The commandments of the law, both as a covenant and as a rule, are materially, but are not formally, the same.

Although the law as a rule of duty to believers, requires perfect obedience from them; yet it admits of God's *accepting* of their sincere obedience performed in faith, though it be imperfect. It admits of his accepting of this obedience, not, indeed, as any part of their justifying righteousness, not, as the foundation of his acceptance of their persons as righteous; but, as the fruit and evidence, of their being vitally united to his beloved Son, as Jehovah their Righteousness, and of their being *already* accepted in Him [p].

[p] Eph. i. 6. Heb. xiii. 16.

Since true believers are already interested irrevocably, in the covenant of grace, in the righteousness of Christ, and in the favour of God; and since they have in Christ, and on the ground of his righteousness imputed to them, a complete security against eternal death, and a full title to eternal life; the law as the law of Christ, has no sanction of *judicial* rewards or punishments: it has no *promise* of eternal life, nor *threatening* of eternal death, annexed to it. The form of the covenant of works, indeed, is eternally binding on all, who live and die under that violated covenant; but, because Christ as last Adam, hath answered all the demands of it, for believers, they are delivered from the law in *that* form [q].

The law which believers are under, is the law of Christ, and of God in Christ, which has *no promise* of eternal life to them, *for* their obedience to it. The promise of eternal life to the saints, is the promise of the covenant of grace or the *gospel*, and not of the law as a rule of duty. Eternal life is promised to them, not in consideration of their sincere obedience to the law as a rule of life; but, on account of Christ's perfect obedience to it as a covenant of works, received by faith, and imputed by God. It is promised to them, not as a reward of debt, for their sincere obedience; but, as "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord [r]." The righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to them, gives them a perfect title to life: they are already heirs of it, "and joint heirs with Christ." They have the begun possession of it, and have the

[q] Rom. vii. 4, 6. [r] Rom. vi. 23.

gracious promise of the gospel, that they shall, in due time, attain the perfect and everlasting possession. There is therefore no need, that a promise of eternal life, should be annexed to the law as a rule of duty, to be fulfilled to believers, on the ground of *their obedience* to that law. And indeed it *cannot* be annexed to it. For since the law as a rule, cannot require less than perfection of obedience, and since believers cannot, in this life, yield perfect obedience to its precepts, it cannot justify them, nor promise life to them for their obedience. Neither can they begin to perform even sincere obedience to it, until in union with Christ, they are already justified and *fully entitled* to life eternal. Accordingly, we are informed in Scripture, that believers are justified by grace, and by no law, nor work of a law, whether it be of the law as a covenant, or of the law as a rule. "That no man is justified by a law in the sight of God, it is evident[s]." "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by a law[t]." "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of a law[u]." No promise of life, then, is made to the sincere obedience of believers to the law of Christ; otherwise, their title to life would be founded, not entirely on the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, but partly, if not wholly, on works done by themselves.

As no promise of eternal life, belongs to the law

[s] Gal. iii. 11. [t] Gal. v. 4. [u] Rom. iii. 28.—The original word signifying *law*, in these passages, I have used the freedom to translate literally; that the Apostle's meaning may more clearly appear.

as a rule of duty to believers; so *no threatening* of eternal death, belongs to it. Not that the law considered as a covenant of works, is stripped of its sanction. The penal sanction of it in that form, is *eternal*, and must be eternally endured by all who die under it. But, because the whole penal sanction of it was wholly endured by Christ, the Surety of them who believe on him, and because his infinite satisfaction for all their sins, is placed to their account; that law, being satisfied, cannot now condemn them. And as the law in its covenant-form, cannot condemn them, or require from them, a double payment of the same debt; so neither can the law, in the hand of Christ, as a rule. No Divine law can condemn them. "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus[w]." Believers are perfectly and irreversibly justified; and therefore, though their iniquities *deserve* eternal wrath, yet they can no more, make them actually liable to that wrath. It is the peculiar privilege of believers only, who are already justified, and so set for ever beyond the reach of condemnation, to be under the law in the hand of Christ. But were a threatening of eternal death, annexed to the law as a rule, in his hand; every time that the believer transgressed this law, it would lay him anew, under condemnation; and, as he, every moment, falls short of perfection in his obedience, he must inevitably be, every moment, under condemnation to eternal wrath. But instead of this, he always continues in a state of justification, and "never comes into condemnation." "Whom God

[w] Rom. viii. 1.

did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth[x]?" "Their sins and their iniquities, will I remember no more[y]." Though the law as a rule of duty, then, standing under the covenant of grace, as the instrument by which, the Lord Jesus rules the subjects of his spiritual kingdom, has lost nothing of its original authority to direct and bind them, even to perfect obedience; yet, it has no promise of eternal life to them, for their obedience, and no threatening of eternal death, for their disobedience. Therefore, as the law in its covenant-form, cannot either justify or condemn believers; so neither can the law as a rule of life[a].

But though the law as a rule of duty to believers, has no sanction of *judicial* rewards and punishments; yet, it has a sanction of gracious rewards, and of paternal chastisements. A promise of *gracious rewards* or rewards of *grace*, to believers, in the way of their obedience, is annexed to the law in the hand of Christ. In order to dispose and encourage them to obedience, God promises, on Christ's account, gracious rewards to them; such as, The light of his gracious countenance, sensible and comfortable communion with him, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the assurance of their personal interest in Christ, freedom from trouble of mind, hope in their death, and degrees of glory in

[x] Rom. viii. 33, 34.
[y] Heb. viii. 12.
[z] See Larger Cat. Quest. 97.

eternity, corresponding probably to the degrees of their holy activity in time[a]. To the law as a rule in the hand of Christ, belongs also a threatening of *paternal chastisements.* In order to deter believers from disobedience, as well as to promote in them, the mortification of sin, the Lord threatens that, although he will not cast them into hell for their sins, yet he will permit hell, as it were, to enter their consciences; that, he will visit them with a series of outward afflictions; that, he will deprive them of that sensible communion with him, which they sometime enjoyed; and that, he will afflict them with bitterness instead of sweetness, and with terror instead of comfort[b]. These chastisements are, to a believer, no less awful, and much more forcible, restraints from sin, than even the prospect of vindictive wrath would be. A filial fear of them, will do more, to influence him to the practice of holiness, than all the slavish fears of hell can do. A fear, lest he should be deprived of that sweetness of communion with God, with which he is favoured, will constrain him to say to his lusts, as the fig-tree in Jotham's parable, "Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over you?" 'Shall I leave the spiritual delight which I have had, in communion with my God and Saviour, and have fellowship with you?' Or if, for his iniquities, he be already under the dreadful frowns of his heavenly Father; his recollection of the comfort, which he formerly enjoyed, and of which he is now deprived, will make him

[a] Psal. xix. 11. 2 Cor. i. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

[b] Psal. lxxxix. 30—33. 1 Cor. xi. 30, 32. Heb. xii. 6—11.

say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now [c]."

It is plain that, no sanction but this, is suitable to the happy state of believers. They, in union and communion with the blessed Redeemer, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and instated in the covenant of grace, in which they "shall never perish, but have everlasting life." So long, indeed, as they are imperfect in holiness, and their temper and practice subject to change, such promises and threatenings are necessary. But it is manifest, that their necessity is occasioned by the remainders of sin in the saints, who require to be treated as children under age. It is necessary, in their state of imperfection, that they be influenced to obedience, by the promises and threatenings of the law of Christ: for, though their being excited to obedience, by these promises and threatenings, is neither servile nor slavish, yet it is *childish*. It is not suitable to the state of one, who, is "come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." When believers become perfect, they will perform obedience as freely, as the angels in heaven do; without being in the least influenced to it, by promises or threatenings: and the nearer they come to perfection in holiness, the more free and disinterested, will their obedience be. But so long as they are in a state of imperfection, it is their duty, in order to advance in holiness, to have respect, in their obedience, to what the law of Christ promises and threatens to them [cc].

[c] Hos. ii. 7.

[cc] Promises of gracious rewards, and threats of paternal chastisements, do properly belong to the covenant of grace which has no

It appears evident from what has been said, That, though the ten commandments are the *substance* of the law of nature; yet they do not contain the *whole* of this law. The law of nature, inscribed on the heart of man in his creation, had a penal sanction. Although a penal sanction, as is evident from the case of glorified saints and confirmed angels, who are, and who will remain eternally, under the law of nature, is not inseparable from that law, yet such a sanction belongs to it.

The devout and attentive reader, may hence discern the *difference*, between Heathen morality, pharisaical righteousness, and true holiness. Heathen morality is, external obedience to the law of *nature*, and may be termed, natural religion. Pharisaical righteousness is, hypocritical obedience to the law as a *covenant of works*, and is usually called, legal righteousness, or the works of the law. True holiness is, spiritual and sincere obedience to the law as a *rule of life*, in the hand of the blessed Mediator, and is commonly styled, evangelical holiness, or true godliness. True believers are the only persons who obey the law, in its relation to Christ and to the covenant of grace; and their acts of obedience, are the only spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ [d]. The holy Lord

proper penalty, rather than to the law as a rule. They are implied in the blessings promised in that covenant, or at least, are means of accomplishing the promises of it. But, seeing the law as a rule is received into the covenant of grace, as the instrument of Christ's government of his spiritual subjects; those promises and threats may, I humbly apprehend, be said, though not with *strict* propriety, to belong, or be annexed to, the law in that form.

[d] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

God, doth not account himself glorified, by any obedience from the sons of men, except that which, they perform to him as in Christ. For it is the will of the Father, the almighty Creator, and sovereign Ruler of the world, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour himself; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ *is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father."

It may be justly inferred from the preceding doctrine, that the distinction of the Divine law, especially, into the law as a covenant of works, and as a rule of life, is a *very important* distinction. It is, as the attentive reader has seen, a *scriptural* distinction: and it is necessary, in the hand of the Spirit, to qualify believers for understanding clearly, the grace and glory of the gospel, as well as the acceptable manner, of performing every duty required in the law. To distinguish truly and clearly, between the law as a covenant, and the law as a rule, is, as one expresses it, 'the *key*, which opens the hidden treasure of the gospel.' No sooner had the Spirit of truth, given Luther but a glimpse of that distinction, than he declared that, he seemed to himself to be admitted into Paradise, and that, the whole face of the Scripture was changed to him. Indeed, without a spiritual and true knowledge of that distinction, a man can neither discern, nor love, nor obey acceptably, "the truth as it is in Jesus." Nay, if the law as a covenant, were not to be distinguished from the law as a rule, in the hand of the Mediator, it would inevitably follow, That believers are still under the law as a covenant of works; that they ought still to regard God, not

as their gracious God and Father, but as their angry and avenging Judge; and that their sins, are still to be considered as transgressions only of the covenant of works, and as rendering them, notwithstanding their justification, *actually subject* to the curse and revenging wrath of God;—contrary to Scripture [e], and to our Confession of faith [f].

As an *evidence* that, all unregenerate persons, are under the dominion of the law as a covenant of works, the *natural bent* of their hearts, in all their views respecting the means of salvation, is to the way of that covenant. They all desire to be under the law of works. All who have embraced, either one or another of the false religions, that are in the world, agree at least in *this* principle, 'That it is by doing, that men are to live.' Hence, when the Lord opens the eyes of a man to see that horrible gulf of sin and misery, into which the first Adam plunged him, he is strongly inclined to exert himself for deliverance, in the way of the covenant of works. He struggles hard to forsake his sins, and to perform his duties; hoping that, by his own performances, he will become so righteous, as to pacify the wrath of God, and to procure for himself eternal life. Ah, ignorant, proud, vain attempt! This, however, he resolutely persists in doing, until he be made to despair, of ever being able to procure salvation for himself, in the way of that covenant. Indeed, this natural bent of the depraved heart, toward the way of the law as a covenant,

[e] Rom. vi. 14—and vii. 1—6. and viii. 1, 2.

[f] Confess. Chap. xix. art. 1, 6.

together with deep ignorance of the high demands of the law in that form, is the source of all the self-righteousness that is in the world. To take sinners off from this, to a cordial reliance only on the righteousness of the second Adam, for all their title to salvation, is a special part of the Holy Spirit's work, in conviction and conversion; and to do it, requires a *greater* exertion of his Almighty power, than even to create a world.

From what has been said, we may also see that, there are two sorts of sinners, who offend more especially, against the law in its covenant-form; namely, *legalists* and *antinomians*. Legalists, on the one hand, transgress against it, by seeking to be justified by their own pretended obedience to it: Antinomians, on the other, offend against it, by despising the Divine authority and obligation of it. The former, transgress against the *form* of the law as a covenant, by depending on their own obedience for justification: the latter, offend against the *matter* of it, or the ten commandments, as vested with all the infinite authority which belongs to it, by disregarding that high authority. Legalists contend, that believers are under the law, even as it is the covenant of works: Antinomians on the contrary assert, that believers are not only, not under it as a covenant, but not under it, even as a rule of duty. These two assertions, are not more contrary to one another, than they both are, to the *truth* as it is in Jesus. In the Scriptures, we are informed that, believers are delivered from the law as a covenant of works; but that, they are under it, and delight to be under it, as a rule of life. Indeed, to

affirm that they are freed from it in its covenant-form, implies that they are under it in another form.

Does the law in its covenant-form, *command* every sinner under it, who hears the gospel, to believe and repent? Then, it is of inexpressible importance to every sinner, *to believe that it does.* If the law as a covenant of works, do *not* require of every sinner under it who hears the gospel, faith and repentance; it will follow, that faith and repentance, as acts or works, cannot be excluded from being *grounds*, of a sinner's justification in the sight of God: since, on that supposition, they cannot be denominated works of the law; under which character, all the sinner's works of obedience are, in Scripture, excluded from being causes of his justification before God[g]. Doubtless, if the moral law, or law as a covenant, taken into the administration of the covenant of grace, do *not* require faith and repentance, then, there must be a *new law* to command them. Besides, if faith and repentance, which, as some have said, contain all that is necessary to salvation, be commanded only by a new and gospel-law, then the moral law is unnecessary; and so, a wide door will be opened to gross Antinomianism.—Sinners, then, are commanded by the moral law as a covenant, and by no other law, to believe and repent; and saints, are commanded by the moral law as a rule of life, and by no other, to advance in the exercise of faith and repentance.

To conclude: Is it so that the moral law, has lost nothing of its original authority and obligation,

[g] Gal. ii. 16.

by being, to believers, divested of its covenant-form? Then the supposition, that the sovereign authority of God in it, is laid aside, or that the original obligation of it, is in the least degree weakened, by its being issued to believers, as the law of Christ, is utterly groundless. Such a supposition, reflects great dishonour on the glorious Mediator. For, is not our Lord Jesus, equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit, "Jehovah, the most High over all the earth?" Doth not "all the fulness of the Godhead, dwell in Him bodily[h]?" Is not the name, or infinite authority of God, in him[i]? Is it not by Him, that all things were created, and that they all consist[k]? How then is it possible, that the original and infinite authority of the Divine law, can in the smallest degree be lessened, by its issuing to true believers, from Him who is God over all, the great God our Saviour?

CHAPTER II.

OF THE LAW OF GOD AS PROMULGATED TO THE ISRAELITES, FROM MOUNT SINAI.

After the Israelites, the peculiar people of God had, during their long continuance, and grievous bondage in Egypt, become grossly ignorant of the precepts and penalties of his righteous law, He graciously condescended to reveal it to them, in express terms, and with awful solemnity, from mount

[h] Col. ii. 9. [i] Exod. xxiii. 21. [k] Col. i. 16, 17.

Sinai. In this publication of his law to them, he summed it up in ten commandments; and therefore it is commonly styled, The law of the ten commandments. Whilst it is largely set forth, and explained in the whole word of God, it is briefly comprehended in ten words or commandments[l]. It was God in the person of the *Son*, who, from the top of mount Sinai, spake these words. For we read that, the Prophet, whom Jehovah was to raise up to the children of Israel, of their brethren like unto Moses, was "the Angel who spake to him in the mount Sinai[m]." And the apostle Paul saith, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh;" namely, "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant:" "for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, &c[n]." After the Son of God had, in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel, spoken those commandments, out of the midst of the fire, he wrote them on two tables of stone. Moses informs us that, "the tables were written on both their sides; that, on the one side and on the other, they were written[o]." They were filled with writing on both their sides, perhaps, in order to teach us that, when this law is written on the hearts of believers, they are sanctified wholly[p]; and that, nothing must be either added to the words of the law, or taken away from them. It is remarkable, that the ten commandments were, by the finger of God, written on tables of stone, *twice*. After the first two tables

[l] Deut. x. 4. [m] Acts vii. 37, 38. [n] Heb. xii. 25, 26.
[o] Exod. xxxii. 15. [p] 1 Thess. v. 23.

had been broken by Moses, beneath the mount, the Lord was graciously pleased to write, on other two tables, the same words that he had written on the first [q]. His writing of the law twice, without the smallest variation, and that on tables of stone, was doubtless intended to represent to us, as well as to the Israelites, the immutable authority, and eternal obligation, of that law. When the moral law was promulgated to Israel, from mount Sinai or Horeb, we are informed that, it was given them in the form of *a covenant*. Moses said to them, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb [r]." "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you [s]." Hence, the tables of stone are styled, the tables of the covenant, and the words engraven on them, the words of the covenant.

The ten commandments, accordingly, were published from Sinai, in the form of a *covenant*, or federal transaction. The Sinai-transaction was a *mixed* dispensation. In it, the covenant of grace was *repeated* and *published*; the covenant of works was awfully *displayed*, in subservience thereto; and a national covenant between God and the Israelites, who also made, as an *appendage* to the covenant of grace. Accordingly, the law of the ten commandments was thence promulgated, by the Son of God, the glorious Mediator, as a rule of life to believers, in a manner suited to the covenant of grace; the same law was repeated and displayed to the Israelites, in the form of the covenant of works; and it was published to them, as the matter of a national

[q] Exod. xxxiv. 1. [r] Deut. v. 2. [s] Deut. iv. 23.

covenant, or covenant of peculiarity, between God and them. I shall endeavour, briefly to consider the moral law, in each of these views.

SECT. I. *Of the* COVENANT OF GRACE, *and of the ten commandments, as the* RULE OF DUTY *to believers according to it, as published from mount Sinai.*

THE covenant of grace, both in itself, and in the intention of God, was the principal part of the Sinai-transaction. It was therefore published first; as appears from these words, in the preface, standing before the commandments, "I am the Lord *thy God.*" These gracious words, in which, Jehovah exhibited himself to the Israelites as their God, were spoken to them, as his peculiar people, the natural seed of Abraham, and as typical of all his spiritual seed[t]. To this gracious offer or grant, which Jehovah made of himself to them, as their God and Redeemer, the ten commandments were annexed, as a rule of duty to them as his professed people, and especially, to true believers among them as his spiritual seed. In virtue of his having engaged to answer for them, all the demands of the law as a covenant of works, he repeats and promulgates it to them, as a rule of life in the covenant of grace. Instead of saying to them, Keep my commandments, that I may become your God; he, on the contrary, said to each of them, "I am the Lord thy God," therefore keep my commandments. This is not the form of the law as it is the covenant of works, but the form of it only as the

[t] Gal. iii. 16, 17.

law of Christ, and as standing in the covenant of grace. But more particularly: That, in the Sinai-transaction, the covenant of grace, with the law annexed to it as a rule of life, was repeated and delivered to the Israelites, appears evident to me, from the following considerations:

1. The ten commandments are *founded* on these words of the preface; "I am the Lord THY GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage[u]." The inestimable privilege here exhibited, is made the foundation of the duty required. Jehovah the Son of God, and the Messenger of the covenant of grace, spoke those words to the members of his visible church, the natural posterity of Abraham. He declares that he is their God, in virtue of this covenant made with Abraham; "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, --- to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee[w]." He also affirms that, he is their God who hath brought them out of the land of Egypt, according to this promise which he made to Abraham, when, in the most solemn manner, he renewed the covenant with him; "Afterwards shall they come out with great substance[x]." He first avouches himself to be their God and Redeemer, and then, commands them to perform all their duties to him. This was the very form of his covenant with Abraham. "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect[y];" as if he had said, 'I am a God all-suffi-

[u] Exod. xx. 2.
[w] Gen. xvii. 7.
[x] Gen. xv. 14.
[y] Gen. xvii. 1.

cient for thee, both to uphold and protect thee, and to provide all good things for thee: walk therefore before my face, and be thou perfect.' But the covenant, made and renewed with Abraham, as also with Isaac and Jacob, was the covenant of grace; a covenant to be believed, and embraced by faith. When the covenant, made with the Israelites at Sinai, was afterwards renewed with them in the land of Moab; we are told, it was in order "that the Lord might be unto them a God, as he had sworn to their fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob[z]." The covenant of grace, then, which had been made with Abraham, was the very covenant, that was expressed in the preface to the ten commandments, and repeated from mount Sinai to the Israelites. Besides in the Sinai-transaction, Jehovah exhibited himself to Israel, not only as their God and Redeemer; but as a God who *promised*, to forgive iniquity[a], to circumcise the heart to love him[b], to take them for his inheritance, to lead them, instruct them, and keep them as the apple of his eye[c], and to dwell and walk among them[d]. These evidently are promises of the covenant of grace.

2. They, with whom Jehovah covenanted at Sinai, are styled in Scripture, The *people* of God, upon whom he was to have mercy[e]; a *peculiar treasure* to him, above all people[f]; his *first-born*, precious in his sight and honourable[g]; and the

[z] Deut. xxix. 12, 13.
[a] Exod. xxxiv. 7.
[b] Deut. xxx. 6,
[c] Deut. xxxii. 9, 10.
[d] Exod. xxix. 45, 46. Lev. xxvi. 12.
[e] Hos. ii. 23.
[f] Exod. xix. 5.
[g] Exod. iv. 22.

seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made [h]. These descriptions of ancient Israel, given of them, as a people in covenant with God, refer evidently to the covenant of grace.

3. God commanded the two tables of stone, on which he had written the ten commandments, the second time, to be *laid up in the ark*. Accordingly, after the first two tables, which had been hewen, as well as engraven, by God himself, had been broken beneath the mount; the second, which were hewen by Moses the typical mediator, were deposited in the ark [i]. This represented that, after the Divine law as a covenant of works, had been broken, it was to be fulfilled by Christ the true Mediator, and to be laid up, as fulfilled and honoured, in Him [k]. Because the fulfilling of the law, written on those tables, by obedience and suffering, was the proper condition of life, in the covenant of grace made with the second Adam, as the Representative of his spiritual seed [l]; they are called, "The tables of the covenant," and the ark, in which they were deposited, "The ark of the covenant [m]." And because the law as a rule of life, in which, Jehovah testified his will to his people, was written on them, as also because they were a testimony, of his gracious covenant with that people; they are styled, "The two tables of testimony [n]," and the ark into which they were put, "The ark of the testimony [o]." Moreover, the tables of the law in the ark, were covered and hid,

[h] Gal. iii. 16. [i] Deut. x. 3, 5. [k] Isa. xlii. 21.
[l] Matth. iii. 15. [m] Heb. ix. 4. [n] Exod. xxxi. 18.
[o] Exod. xxv. 22.

by the mercy-seat or propitiatory cover. This prefigured, that the violated law should be so covered by the Divine Surety, who was to fulfil all the righteousness of it for believers, as never to appear any more, to condemn them[p]. It was, after the Lord had renewed with the believing Israelites, the covenant of grace, that he said to Moses, "Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them[q]." It was after that too, that he commanded Moses to make the ark and the mercy-seat; in order, not only to keep the tables safely, but to cover and remove the form of the covenant of works, which had been upon the commandments engraven on them, that believers might not perceive it. And it was also after that solemn transaction, that Moses was enjoined, to lay up the tables in the ark, and under the mercy-seat; to signify that, as the ark with the mercy-seat was an eminent type of Christ, so the law is in Christ to believers, and, in his hand, is issued forth as from the mercy-seat, to them, or from God as pacified toward them. It is manifest, then, that the covenant of grace, with the law annexed to it, as a rule of life, was published from mount Sinai.

4. The same also appears evident, if we consider that, the covenant *made* with the Israelites at Sinai, *could not be* the covenant of works. God could not consistently, either with his own honour, or with the nature of the covenant of works, renew or make again that covenant, with persons, who,

[p] Rom. viii. 33, 34. [q] Exod. xxiv. 12.

by breaking it in the first Adam, had already subjected themselves to the penalty of it. He could, indeed, *display* it in its terror, before condemned sinners, but could not again *make* it with them. Neither could he renew it with the Israelites in particular, without disannulling the covenant of grace made with Abraham, in which, he graciously promised to be a God to him, and to his seed after him: for a future covenant of works, made with the seed of Abraham, would annul the former covenant of grace, made with him as their representative. But this covenant was not, and could not be, annulled by the transaction at Sinai; for the apostle Paul says, "That the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect[r]." Since the covenant made with the Israelites at Sinai, then, did not, and could not, so disannul the covenant of grace, made with Abraham and his seed, especially his believing seed after him, as to make the promise of no effect, it could not be the covenant of works. It was, therefore, the covenant of grace, that was repeated and offered to his posterity, on that solemn occasion; and it was the law, standing in that gracious covenant, as the rule of their obedience, that was promulgated to them.

5. That, in the transaction at Sinai, the covenant of grace was published to the Israelites, is also evident from this; that, after Moses had taken the book of the covenant, and read it in the audi-

[r] Gal. iii. 17.

ence of the people, he took half of the *blood* of the sacrifices, which had on that solemn occasion been slain, and *sprinkled it on the people*, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words [s]." An Apostle informs us, that Moses, on that great occasion, sprinkled with the blood, the *book* of the covenant, as well as all the people [t]. It would seem that, he laid the book on the altar, *before* he sprinkled the altar, with the other half of the blood. Now, according to the same Apostle, it was the *first Testament*, or Old Testament-dispensation of the covenant of grace, that was thus dedicated with the blood of the sacrifices [u]. It was therefore the covenant of grace, according to the Jewish dispensation of it, that was delivered from mount Sinai. Moreover, the blood sprinkled by Moses, was typical of the blood of Christ; and the sprinkling of that, both on the altar and on the people, was figurative of the sprinkling of this, both on the altar of his Divine nature, for the satisfaction of justice, and on his people, for the justification of their persons, and the sanctification of their natures. But it was the New Testament-dispensation of the covenant of grace, that the blood of Christ confirmed; which is therefore called, "the blood of the everlasting covenant [w]:" and it is according to the covenant of grace, and that only, that the blood of Jesus is sprinkled, either for pardon, or for purification.

6. The promulgation of *the ceremonial law*,

[s] Exod. xxiv. 8
[t] Heb. ix. 19.
[u] Heb. ix. 18, 20.
[w] Heb. xiii. 20.

formed a part of the transaction at Sinai; and that law had no reference, but to the covenant of grace. When it was enacted, to regulate the worship of the Israelites, it was so framed, as to prefigure Messiah in his obedience and suffering, and also the privileges and duties of believers, in every future age, according to the covenant of grace[x]. The sacrifices enjoined by that law, did not make atonement for sin, in any other point of view, than as *types* of the sacrifice of Christ. Hence, the burnt sacrifice, is said to have been "an offering of a sweet savour, *or*, for a savour of rest, to the Lord[y]." But it could not be a sacrifice of a grateful odour to Him, from any value or virtue in itself; but only, from its being a figure of the sacrifice of Christ, with which, as an atonement for the sins of his people, God is infinitely well-pleased[z]. The sacrifices, which the Israelites were enjoined to offer, had indeed influence, to remove typical or ceremonial guilt, and to prevent temporal punishment; but they had not the smallest efficacy, to remove real or moral guilt from the conscience. But though they themselves, could procure only a figurative pardon, they served to prefigure our great Redeemer, who, "by one offering, hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified[a]." And it was only, when an Israelite presented his sacrifice, in the faith of the great atonement, to be, according to the covenant of grace, made by the sacrifice of Christ, that he received a real and full remission of sin.

[x] Col. ii. 17. Heb. x. 1.
[y] Lev. i. 9.
[z] Heb. ix. 9, 10, 14. and x. 4.
[a] Heb. x. 14.

7. Lastly, *Circumcision* and the *Passover*, the two sacraments of the covenant of grace, as formerly made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were *appended* to the transaction at Sinai [b]. They were added to it, as seals of the covenant of grace; in order to confirm the interest and the faith of believers, in that covenant: and, by Divine appointment, they continued to be the signs and seals of it, during the whole period of the Jewish dispensation. But the sacraments of the covenant of grace, could not, as sealing ordinances, be appended to *any other* covenant. The covenant of grace, then, with the moral law standing in it, as a rule of life to believers, was promulgated from mount Sinai to the Israelites; and was, both in itself, and in God's intention, the *principal* part of the transaction a Sinai.

It will be proper here to observe that, although believing and unbelieving Israelites, in the Sinai-transaction, were under the covenant of grace; yet they could not both be under it, in the *same* respects. The believers among them, were *internally* and *really* under it, and under the moral law as a rule of life, as all true believers in every age are [c]; but the unbelievers, were only *externally*, in respect of their visible church-state, under it [d], and under the law as a rule of duty.

[b] John vii. 22, 23. Deut. xvi. 1—8.
[c] Rom. vi. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 21. [d] Rom. ix. 4.

SECT. II. *Of the moral law in the form of a* COVENANT OF WORKS, AS DISPLAYED *to the Israelites on mount Sinai.*

THE violated covenant of works, as I observed above, was not, and could not be, *made* or *renewed* with the Israelites at Sinai; for it was a *broken* covenant, and besides, it was a covenant between God and man as *friends*, whereas now, man is become the enemy of God. But though it was not renewed with them, yet it was, on that solemn occasion, repeated and *displayed* to them. It was not proposed to them, in order that they might consent, by their own works, to fulfil the condition of it; but it was displayed before them, in subservience to the covenant of grace, that they might see, how impossible it was for them as condemned sinners, to perform that perfect obedience, which is the immutable condition of life in it. Although the Lord knew well, that they were far from being able to yield perfect obedience; yet he saw proper, to set forth eternal life to them upon these terms[e]; and so, to speak to them, in a strain adapted to their self-righteous temper. For, previous to the giving of the law to them at Sinai, they were so ignorant of the perfection, and vast extent of that holy law, as well as of their own utter inability, to perform the smallest acceptable obedience to it; and at the same time, they were so full of self-confidence, as to say to Moses, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do[f]." God, therefore, displayed on mount Sinai, the law of the ten com-

[e] Lev. xviii. 5. Deut. xxvii. 26. [f] Exod. xix. 8.

mandments as a covenant of works, in subservience to the covenant of grace. He displayed it in that form, in order that the people might, by contemplating it, see what *kind* and *degree* of righteousness it required, as the condition of eternal life; and that by means of it, finding themselves utterly destitute of perfect righteousness, they might be impelled to take hold of the covenant of grace, in which, the perfect righteousness of the second Adam, is provided and exhibited, for the justification of all who believe.

Now, that the law of the ten commandments as a covenant of works, was repeated and *displayed* on mount Sinai, in *subservience* to the covenant of grace, appears evident,

1. From the thunderings and lightnings, the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the thick darkness and the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the fire, on that awful occasion[g]. These terrible emblems, signified the *vindictive and tremendous wrath* of God, which is due to all the race of Adam, for their breach of the covenant of works, by transgressing the law of that covenant[h]. They represented also the extreme *danger*, to which, every sinner who continues under the law in its covenant-form, is exposed; as being liable, every moment, to the eternal execution of its dreadful curse. This awful display of the law as a covenant of works, though it was not the principal, yet was the most *conspicuous*, part of the Sinai-transaction: for "the people *saw* the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of

[g] Exod. xx. 18. Deut. v. 22, 26. [h] Gal. iii. 10.

the trumpet, and the mountain smoking:" "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake[i]." Now, the covenant of works was displayed, in this tremendous form, before the Israelites; in order that self-righteous and secure sinners among them, might be alarmed, and deterred from expecting justification in the sight of God, by the works of the law; and that, convinced of their sinfulness and misery, they might be persuaded, to flee speedily to the blessed Mediator, and to trust in Him for righteousness and salvation. That terrible display, accordingly, contributed in some measure, to humble them, to lessen that self-confidence which they had formerly discovered, and to shew them their need of the Divine Redeemer, and of union with him by faith, in order to their being qualified for performing acceptable obedience. This appears from their own words to Moses, after the dreadful sight which they beheld: "Speak thou unto us," said they, "all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will *hear* and *do*." Standing afar off, they do not say, as they did, before the publication of the law at Sinai, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do;" but,—"We will *hear* and do:" 'We will first hear or believe, and then do.' For speaking in this strain, the Lord commended them thus: "They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them[k]!" They said well, in that they made hearing or believing, the

[i] Heb. xii. 21. [k] Deut. v. 27—29.—Hearing is applicable to the words of the gospel, as well as to those of the law.

principle of acceptable obedience[l]. The law then, as it is the covenant of works, entered at Sinai, "that the offence might abound," not in the life by the commission of it, but in the conscience by conviction[m]: it entered, that it might be their "school-master to bring them unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith[n]."

2. That the law as a covenant of works, was displayed on mount Sinai, appears also from this; That the ten commandments, written on tables of stone, and so given to Moses on Sinai, are, by the apostle Paul, styled, "*the ministration of death*, written and engraven in stones[o]." Now it is manifest, that these commandments are no otherwise the ministration of death, than as they are in the form of the covenant of works. In this form, they were delivered to Moses, to be deposited in the ark; in order to prefigure, the fulfilling of them by Messiah, "the Surety of a better covenant," and the concealing of that form, or the removal of it from them, to all who should believe in Him.

3. The moral law, as it was delivered from mount Sinai, is, in Scripture, expressly styled *a covenant*. These are the two covenants; *the one* from the mount Sinai[p]. The law, in that promulgation of it, was such a covenant, as had the *appearance* through misapprehension of its design, of disannulling the covenant of grace, made with Abraham. "The covenant," says the apostle Paul, "that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, can-

[l] Heb. xi. 6. [m] Rom. v. 20. [n] Gal. iii. 24.
[o] 2 Cor. iii. 7. [p] Gal. iv. 24.

not disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect [q]." The law, included a way of obtaining a title to the heavenly inheritance, typified by that of Canaan, so very different from that of the promise made to Abraham, as to be incompatible with it. "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise [r]. The covenant of the law from mount Sinai, then, was the covenant of works; which contains a method of obtaining the inheritance, inconsistent with that of the promise; but which cannot disannul the promise, or covenant of grace. Besides, Moses, speaking of that law under the denomination of a covenant, affirms that, it was *not* made with the Patriarchs, or displayed publicly before them. "The Lord our God, says he, made a covenant with us in Horeb: the Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us [s]." This covenant displayed on Sinai, then, was not the covenant of promise, made with the fathers of the Israelitish people.

4. The covenant of works is, in the New Testament, introduced, and illustrated from the law as given by Moses. Our blessed Lord, in replying to one who asked him, What good thing he should do, that he might have eternal life, said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments; namely, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother, &c [t]." These being some of the com-

[q] Gal. iii. 17.
[r] Gal. iii. 18.
[s] Deut. v. 2, 3.
[t] Matth. xix. 17—19.

mandments, promulgated from mount Sinai, our Lord repeats them to him, in the form of the covenant of works. And the apostle Paul, when mentioning the promise of the covenant of works, says, "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things, shall live by them [u]." In expressing also the penal sanction of that covenant, he says, "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written [w], Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them [x]." That a conditional promise [y], then, and a dreadful curse [z], as well as the ten commandments, were published to the Israelites, is plain; and it is no less evident, that, according to our Apostle in the passages cited above, they are the *form* of the covenant of works.

5. That the law in the form of a covenant of works, was displayed on mount Sinai, appears likewise, from the opposition between the law and grace, often mentioned and inculcated in the New Testament. We there read that, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ [a];" and that, "The law is not of faith; but, The man that doeth them shall live in them [b]." But it is, in its covenant-form only, that the law in Scripture, is contrasted with grace.

6. In the Sinaitic transaction, the hewing of the latter tables of stone by Moses, before God

[u] Rom. x. 5. [w] Deut. xxvii. 26. [x] Gal. iii. 10.
[y] Lev. xviii. 5. [z] Deut. xxvii. 26. [a] John i. 17.
[b] Gal. iii. 12.

wrote the ten commandments on them, might be intended to teach sinners, that they must be convinced of their sin and misery, by the law as a *covenant of works*, before it can be written legibly on their hearts, as a rule of life.

7. Lastly, The same also appears, from these words of the apostle Paul, cited above, "These are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage[c]." The covenant which gendereth to bondage, is, the *covenant of works* made with Adam, as the head and representative of all its natural posterity, and displayed on mount Sinai to the Israelites. This covenant gendereth to bondage; for, according to the Apostle, the children of it, or they who are under it, are excluded from the heavenly inheritance, as Ishmael was, from Canaan the typical and earthly inheritance. "Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman, shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman[d]." The generating of bond-children, excluded from the heavenly inheritance, is a distinguishing property of the covenant of works; and it cannot be a property of the covenant of grace, under any of its dispensations. It is the covenant of works only, that has a tendency, to beget a servile and slavish frame of spirit.

It is evident, then, that the covenant of works was *displayed* on mount Sinai. It was there displayed, together with the covenant of grace, in order to subserve the latter; and particularly, to represent to the Israelitish church, that the dis-

[c] Gal. iv. 24. [d] Gal iv. 30.

charging of the principal and penalty of the covenant of works, was to be required of Messiah, the Surety of elect sinners, as the proper condition of the covenant of grace.

Although the Sinaitic transaction, was a *mixed* dispensation; yet the covenant of grace and the covenant of works, were *not blended together* in it. The latter as well as the ceremonial law, was *added* to the former; and was added to it, in order that, the Israelites might be so convinced of their sinfulness and misery, as to see their extreme need of embracing the promise, or covenant of grace. God, says the apostle Paul, "gave the inheritance to Abraham by *promise*. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was *added* because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made[e]." The promise, made to Abraham and to his seed, we have found in the preface to the ten commandments. To this promise or covenant of grace, then, was the law or subservient covenant of works, *added*. It formed no part of the covenant of grace, which had been a covenant entire to the Patriarchs, before that was added to it at Sinai; and it is a covenant entire to believers under the gospel, after that is removed from it: for our Apostle says, "It was added till the seed should come."

Accordingly, the ten commandments as promulgated from mount Sinai, must be considered at least, in a two-fold point of view; namely, as the law of Christ, or the law as a rule of life to believers, and, as the law as it is the matter of a covenant of works,

[e] Gal. iii. 18, 19.

to unregenerate sinners. This I humbly apprehend, is intimated to us, by their having been *twice* written on tables of stone, by God himself[f]. and, by the *double accentuation* of them, in the sacred Original.

In the Sinai-transaction, then, the promise or covenant of grace, was published to the Israelites, and the law or covenant of works also, as subservient to it. The former was and still is, a covenant to be believed or embraced by faith; the latter, a covenant to be done or fulfilled. The apostle Paul, accordingly, contrasts the one with the other, thus; "The law is not of faith: but the man that *doeth* them, shall live in them[g]." The covenant to be embraced by faith, was given to the fathers of the Israelites, as well as to themselves; but concerning the covenant to be done, Moses said to them, "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us[h]." And again, "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; - - - and he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to *perform*, even ten commandments[i]." Although the same covenant of works, that was made with Adam, was displayed from mount Sinai; yet it was, for a very different purpose. God's design, in making this covenant with Adam, was, to have that righteousness which was due to him, from man: but his great design, in displaying it to Israel at Sinai, was, that they, by contemplating it, might see what kind and degree of righteousness, it was, by

[f] Exod. xxxii. 16. and xxxiv. 1.
[g] Gal. iii. 12.
[h] Deut. v. 3.
[i] Deut. iv. 12, 13.

which they could be justified before God; and that, finding themselves wholly destitute of that righteousness, they might be excited to take hold of the covenant of grace, in which, a perfect righteousness for justification, is graciously provided.

Should the attentive reader now ask, Seeing the covenant of grace, and also that of works, were both repeated from mount Sinai, were not the Israelites under *both* these covenants, at one and the same time? I would answer; They could *not* be under both, at the same time, and in the *same respects*. The believers among them, as I hinted above, were *internally* and *really*, under the covenant of grace, and only externally, under that terrible display of the covenant of works, as it was subservient to that of grace[k]; whereas, the unbelievers, were externally and by profession only, under that dispensation of the covenant of grace[l], but were *internally* and *really*, under the covenant of works[m].

Sect. III. *Of the law promulgated from mount Sinai, to the Israelites, as* THE MATTER OF A NATIONAL COVENANT *between God and them.*

When we consider God, as delivering to the Israelites at mount Sinai, not only the moral law, but the ceremonial and *judicial* laws, as appendages to it; and, as requiring them to perform obedience to these, as the condition of their happy entrance into Canaan, and especially, of their peaceful and continual residence in it, as a *nation;* we

[k] Gal. iii. 24. [l] Rom. ix. 4. [m] Rom. iv. 14.
[n] Gal. iv. 4, 5.

are to regard those laws, as the matter of a *national covenant*, or covenant of *peculiarity*, between Jehovah and them. To consider Jehovah the Son of God, as the King or Sovereign of Israel as a nation or political body, is perfectly consistent with our viewing of Him likewise, as their God and Redeemer: and, to regard his law, promulgated from mount Sinai to them, as the *rule* of their obedience considered as a nation, is consistent enough with viewing it, at the same time, as a covenant of works, and as a rule of duty to believers, in the covenant of grace.

In the Sinaitic transaction, then, the eternal Son of God is to be considered, as the Monarch or *King* of the Israelites [p]; and they are to be viewed, as a nation or political community, under a theocratical government. As their *King*, he enacted and proclaimed laws, exacted tribute, disposed of offices in the state, made war and peace, defended his people from their enemies, and punished with death, those of his subjects who refused allegiance to him. He gave the *moral* law to them, as the *primary rule* of the obedience, which he required in this covenant [q]. He gave them also, the *ceremonial* and *judicial* laws, as appendages to it; and these were reducible to one or other, of the precepts of it. The ceremonial institutions, which, in the sacred history, are frequently called *Statutes*, were, for the most part, reducible to precepts of the first table; and the judicial laws, which, in the same history, are often styled *Judgments*, were mostly reducible to precepts of the second table. Some

[p] 1 Sam. xii. 12. [q] Deut. iv. 13.

of the judicial institutions, however, were appendages to precepts of the first table.

Now, as the moral law required Israel, to perform obedience, both to the ceremonial, and the judicial precepts; so, while the ceremonial institutions, were to regulate them in their ecclesiastical capacity, the judicial precepts, were to direct them in their *civil* capacity, as a nation under the immediate government of God, as their King. The laws then, which Jehovah prescribed to the Israelites, by which, he was to govern them as his subjects, were chiefly the judicial laws. And, seeing these are all reducible to precepts of the *moral* law, they required *internal*, as well as external, obedience; the obedience of the heart, as well as of the life: they directed and bound every Israelite, in the inward man, as much as in the outward. The sum of the duty required in the moral law, is LOVE. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might[r]:" "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself[s]." Remarkable, are these words of Moses to Israel: "Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that *love* him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that *hate* him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that *hateth* him, he will repay him to his face[t]." One of the precepts of the second table of the moral law, to which, the judicial precepts were redu-

[r] Deut. vi. 5. [s] Lev. xix. 18. [t] Deut. vii. 9, 10.

cible, is, "Thou shalt not *covet*[u]." Seeing God was a *Spirit*, under the old, as well as he is, under the new dispensation; he, as the King of Israel, required more from them, than merely *external* obedience to his commands. Loyalty even to a mere earthly prince, comprises inward respect, as well as outward adherence, to him and to his laws.

The *conditions*, then, of that national covenant, which God made with the Israelites at Sinai, were, The obedience both of the heart and of the life, to all his commands, and more immediately, to those of his *judicial* law. "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command you this day, to *love* the Lord your God, and to serve him with *all your heart*, and with *all your soul;* that I will give you the rain of your land, in his due season[w], &c.

The *promises* of that national covenant, were promises of *temporal* good things to the Israelites, both as a *body politic*, and as individuals; and of these in subservience to their enjoyment of religious privileges. The inheritance of the earthly Canaan, as typical of the eternal inheritance, was given to Abraham by promise, by an *absolute promise*, "For if the inheritance be of the law," says an Apostle, "it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise[x]." God promised freely the land of Canaan, to Abraham and his seed, as an *inheritance;* and therefore the promise of it, was not a conditional, but an absolute promise. Accordingly, it is called "the land of promise[y]."

[u] Exod. xx. 17.
[w] Deut. xi. 13—15.
[x] Gal. iii. 18.
[y] Heb. xi. 8, 9.

The typical inheritance of Canaan, then, was not of the law; that is, it was not given to Abraham and his seed, on *condition of their obedience*, as if that had founded their title to it; but it was given to them, by an *absolute* promise. In the Sinai-transaction, Jehovah promised to Israel as a nation, in reference to Canaan, That they should easily subdue the nations of Canaan; that their land should abound with milk and honey, corn and wine, and every thing else, conducive to their external prosperity; that, under the Divine protection, they should enjoy a long and peaceable possession of that country; that God would multiply them, as the sands of the sea, and as the stars of heaven; that he would render them valiant in battle, and victorious over their enemies; that he would save them from famine, pestilence, and the other plagues which he had inflicted on the Egyptians; and, that he would favour them with the symbols of his peculiar presence. These were the *leading* promises of the Sinaitic covenant, considered as a national covenant; and they were all exhibited to the Israelites, in a conditional form. This will appear evident, if the passages, marked at the bottom of the page[z], be considered.—But conditions are of two sorts; antecedent, or consequent: antecedent, when the condition is the cause of the thing promised, or is that which gives a pactional title to it: consequent, when the condition is annexed to the promise, as an adjunct to the thing promised, or, as a qualification in the party to

[z] Exod. xxiii. 22—31. Lev. xxvi. 3—13. Deut. vii. 12—24. and xi. 13—17. and xxviii. 1—13.

whom the promise is made [a]. Now in the latter sense, the obedience of the Israelites, to the precepts especially of their judicial law, was a condition of those promises. It was *not a cause*, why the good things promised, were bestowed on them; but it was a qualification in them, or an adjunct, that was required to attend the blessings promised, and freely conferred. Accordingly, Moses said to Israel, "The Lord hath avouched thee this day, to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments [b]. Had the good things promised to the Israelites, been suspended on their obedience as the *cause* of them, or that which was to give a pactional title to them; such promises, would have been inconsistent with the *absolute* promise, given them in Abraham, their illustrious progenitor. As the Israelites, even in their *civil* capacity, were a *typical* people, and their obedience, a *typical* obedience; so their obedience was to be so connected with their temporal privileges, as to *resemble* the obedience of God's spiritual Israel, in its connection with their spiritual privileges, under the gospel.

True believers among the children of Israel, were the only persons, who performed *sincere* obedience to the law of that covenant. The unbelievers yielded only an external and hypocritical obedience, and that, merely to the letter of the law. So long, however, as they continued to yield even an *external* obedience, the promises of temporal good things, were fulfilled to them: for the Lord

[a] See Ball on the Covenant, p. 133.

[b] Deut. xxvi. 18.

"loved them for the *fathers'* sakes[c];" and therefore, he favoured them with many external benefits. He also conferred favours on them, for the sakes of those among them, who were the objects of his everlasting love[d]. And so great was his love of true holiness, that he rewarded that external obedience, which was only the *shadow* of it, with those *external* benefits, which were *shadows* of good things to come.

The *penal sanctions* of that national covenant, were, for the most part, *temporal punishments.* These were denounced to the Israelites, not only as a nation, but as individuals. The punishments, which the Lord threatened against the violations of that covenant, by Israel as a *community*, were chiefly these: Famine, pestilence, and various other diseases, want of success in war, a smiting of their land with barrenness, a casting of them out of that promised land, and a dispersing of them among the heathen[e]. The punishments, which he threatened to inflict on the *individual*, who should disobey the law of that covenant, were such as these: That, he "would set his face against that man, and cut him off from among his people;" and that, he "would blot him out of his book," or out of the register of the living[f].

So much for the law of God, promulgated from mount Sinai, in its threefold character; as a rule of life to believers, as a covenant of works, and as

[c] Rom. xi. 28. [d] Isa. vi. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 15.
[e] Deut. iv. 25—28. xi. 17. xxviii. 15—68. and xxix. 22—28.
[f] Lev. xvii. 10. xx. 2—6. and xxiii. 29, 30. Exod. xxxii. 33.

the matter of a national covenant, between God and the Israelites.

WHAT has been advanced in this, and the two preceding Sections, may assist in guiding us to the meaning of what the apostle Paul says, in the viii. Chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews, from the 6th to the 10th verse, concerning the *old and new covenants.* His design, in this epistle to the Hebrew Christians, was, to shew them the preference of the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, which has taken place since the death of Christ, to that old dispensation of it, which had been established at Sinai, and had continued until his death. This he illustrates, not by stating the difference between the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace; but, by shewing the difference between the old dispensation, or former manner of administration, of the covenant of grace, and the new dispensation of the same covenant. The former of these dispensations, he styles, The *first* or *old* testament, and the latter, The *new.* The covenant of grace, according to the old dispensation of it, was published from mount Sinai, and, at the same time, the law was given to the Israelites, as the substance of a national or political covenant, between God and them. Now the Apostle, in stating the difference between the old and new dispensations of the covenant of grace, affirms that, the new dispensation or testament, is better than the old, and that, the promises of the new, are better than those of the old. They are *comparatively* better, than the *spiritual* promises of the old dispensation or testament; since,

in them, the grace of God is held forth, in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations[g], than in those of the old: and they are *absolutely* better, than the *temporal* promises of that national covenant, which the Lord made with Israel as a political body. Since the land of Canaan, had been given to the posterity of Abraham, by promise, or as an *inheritance*, the Apostle might, with strict propriety, call even the *national* covenant that had been made with that people, a *testament;* and might shew the preference of the new testament to it, as well as to the old testament, or old dispensation of the covenant of grace. He seems, in Heb. viii. 9. especially, to have stated the contrast, between the new testament, and that national covenant. From the 6th verse, to the end of the Chapter, the original word, which we render *covenant*, the Geneva-translators render *testament;* which seems to me, more suitable to the Apostle's argument, as well as to the analogy of faith, than to translate it *covenant.* For one and the same covenant of grace, was made with believers at Sinai, and is made with believers now, though under different dispensations, each of which, is called a testament. That gracious covenant, as published to Israel from mount Sinai, was a testament; for it consisted of absolute grants and promises. Hence, our Apostle expressly styles it, a testament, and "the first testament[h]." The promises of it, were turned into a testament; for the spiritual blessings promised, were, as they now are, gifts of sovereign grace.

[g] Confess. Chap. vii. Sect. 6.

[h] Heb. ix. 18, 20.

From what has been said, we may learn also the *meaning* of these words above cited: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ [i]." The law, which was given from mount Sinai, by the ministry of Moses, considered as the matter of the covenant of works, was a ministry of *rigour* and of *terror*, in opposition to the gospel-dispensation, which is called *grace:* it was a ministration of condemnation and of death. Considered as a rule of duty in the covenant of grace, and in the hand of Moses the typical mediator, it was a ministration of *shadows*, as opposed to *truth*. The gospel, or New Testament-dispensation of the covenant of grace, is styled "grace and truth." It is *grace*, for it is a clear and efficacious exhibition of the covenant of grace, to sinners of mankind. It is *truth*, as opposed not only to falsehood, but to *shadows*. While Jesus Christ hath brought to his Church, the clearest discoveries of redeeming grace, he himself is the substance of all the Jewish types, and the accomplishment of all their predictions and promises. Moses was the minister of the law; Christ is the Author of grace and truth. All the promises and blessings of salvation, flow from his grace, and are performed by his truth.

Must all the obedience, required in the law as a rule of life, be performed to the Lord as *our* God and Redeemer? Then, in order to perform spiritual and acceptable obedience to the ten commandments, a man must *trust* in the Lord Jesus, for all his salvation, and trust that, God in Christ is his redeeming God, or that, Christ is *his* Redeemer,

[i] John i. 17.

and God in Christ, *his* covenant-God. No obedience to those commands, is acceptable, but that which flows in the channel of the covenant of grace, and is performed to God in Christ, as our covenant-God. The only way to yield evangelical and spiritual obedience, is, first, to accept cordially the offer of Christ, to trust that God in Christ, is our God, and then, to attempt universal obedience to Him as such. We cannot otherwise fear this glorious and fearful name, "THE LORD THY GOD[k]." We are not to do, in order to believe; but to believe, in order to do. We are to trust in Christ, and in the promise, in order to be strengthened for obedience to the precept; for, acceptable obedience can never be performed, but in the strength of our almighty Redeemer. "Without faith in Him," as the principle of obedience, "it is impossible to please God[l]."

To serve the Lord, by keeping diligently his holy commandments, is *a most reasonable service.* Instead of requiring obedience from us, by his mere will, without assigning any other reason, he condescends to enforce his commands, by the most engaging and endearing motives. He exhibits himself to us, as JEHOVAH, the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable One; who hath his being of Himself, and from whom, all being is derived; who is supereminent in every adorable perfection, and, at the same time, is our Creator, Preserver, and Governor. Our obedience, therefore, is not only due to Him, but is infinitely reasonable. Besides, he makes a grant of himself to us, as *our God*, our

[k] Deut. xxviii. 58. [l] Heb. xi. 6.

God in covenant; related to us by an everlasting covenant, which is exhibited in the gospel to us, that we may so take hold of it, as to take possession of him, as our God and portion. He also presents himself to us, as our redeeming God, who, in the person of the Son, redeems us from all our iniquity; who delivers us from our spiritual thraldom, and purifies us to himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works[m]. How delightful to reflect, that he incites us to obedience, not merely by his sovereignty over us, but by the attracting consideration, that he is *our* God, our redeeming God, who hath obtained eternal redemption for us! When the believer considers, what the great Redeemer is to him, and what He hath done, and is doing for him; should not his heart overflow with adoring gratitude, and should not he express his gratitude, by a voluntary and cheerful obedience to all his commands? Can any thing be more reasonable?

The children of fallen Adam, are *so bent upon working for life*, that they will on no account cease from it, till the Holy Spirit so convince them of their sin and misery, as to shew them that, mount Sinai is wholly on fire around them, and that, they cannot with safety remain, a moment longer, within the limits of it. Strange indeed it is, that sinners, already condemned by the law of works, should, nevertheless, imagine a probability, yea, a certainty, of obtaining eternal life by their own works, according to that very law. The depraved sons of Adam think, like Samson, to rouse them-

[m] Tit. ii. 14.

selves and walk, as in former times, as if their strength were yet in them; and multitudes never perceive, that is gone, till after they have been seized, in virtue of that violated law, and bound with chains of eternal darkness. And Oh! what addition to the anguish of damned souls, will it be, to reflect that, they dreamed of attaining life by a law, which, to a sinner is, and cannot but be, a "ministration of death;" and that, by supposing in themselves, an ability still to answer the demands of the law, they have rendered it, so much the more able to condemn them! One reason, therefore, why the Lord displayed the law as a covenant of works, on Sinai, was, That self-righteous Israelites, and all pharisaical professors to the end of time, might see, that as they have sinned, and so have not performed *perfect* obedience, it is absolutely *impossible* for them, to attain justification and eternal life on the footing of their own works[n]. The law was there displayed in its covenant-form, in order to discover sin and condemn for it; and so, to stir up secure sinners, to inquire after the perfect fulfilment of it, by the second Adam[o]: for, till self-righteousness be overthrown, a man will never submit to the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We may hence learn the great *difference*, between performing duties, in the *way* of the covenant of works, and in *that* of the covenant of grace. According to the first covenant, sinners perform duties, in order that these may entitle them to life; but according to the second, saints perform them, because they already have a title to life: according

[n] Rom. iii. 20. [o] Deut. xxvii. 26.

to the former, unregenerate men do them, in their own strength; but according to the latter, regenerate persons perform them, in the strength of grace derived from the second Adam. The motives of obedience, under the covenant of works, are the slavish fear of hell, and the servile hope of heaven; whereas, the motives of duty, in the covenant of grace, are love and gratitude to God, not only as the Creator, and Preserver, but as the God, and Redeemer, of his people [p].

CHAPTER III.

OF THE PROPERTIES OF THE MORAL LAW.

THE peculiar and distinguishing qualities of the moral law, are these:

1. It is *universal*, or of *vast extent*. It extends to all men, in every age, place, and condition, and to all their inclinations, thoughts, words, and actions. "Now we know," says the apostle Paul, "that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that *every* mouth may be stopped, and *all* the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall *no flesh* be justified in his sight [q]." Whilst it binds all the human race, at all times, and in all places and conditions, it reaches to all the dispositions, thoughts, and purposes of the heart, as well as to all the words, and actions of the

[p] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. [q] Rom. iii. 19, 20.

life. It extends to every motion and affection of the soul, and to every part and circumstance of human conduct. The Divine law is a rule for the heart, as well as for the life, of every descendant of Adam. "Thy commandment," says David, "is exceeding broad[r]." No finite understanding can reach the boundary of it, or find out how comprehensive it is. It extends to countless multitudes of things, in every moment, and in every possible circumstance. The moral law, indeed, is summed up in the ten commandments; but it extends itself, notwithstanding, through the whole word of God. So extensive are those commandments, that every thing which he requires, may be reduced to one or other of them.

2. It is *perfect*. "The law of the Lord," says David, "is perfect, converting the soul[s]." So perfect is it, 'that it binds every one to full conformity in the whole man, unto the righteousness of it, and to entire obedience for ever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin[t].' It requires all the duty which a man owes to God, to himself, and to his neighbour; and it demands perfection of obedience. No partial or defective obedience, can be sustained. The smallest degree of imperfection, renders a person obnoxious to the curse: so that, salvation by the law, is absolutely unattainable; because no man, since the fall, can perform the *perfect* obedience which it demands. The perfection of every grace, and of every act of obe-

[r] Psal. cxix. 96. [s] Psal. xix. 7.

[t] Larger Cat. Quest. 99. Matth. v. 21—48. James ii. 10.

dience, is required in it. Nothing must be taken from it, or corrected in it, and nothing is to be added to it[u]. The Lord Jesus explained the law, but he did not, in the smallest degree, either correct, or enlarge it. He and his Apostles taught nothing, but what Moses and the Prophets had previously inculcated[w]. He said, indeed, to his disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another[x]." This command, however, is not new as to the *substance* of it, for it is a summary of the second table of the law; and therefore it is called "an *old* commandment which we had from the beginning[y]:" but it is styled *new*, because it is enforced by the new motive and example, of the immense love of Christ in dying for us. This is evident from these words of his, which immediately follow; "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Christ also commands us to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross and follow him; but these duties are comprised in that of loving God supremely. The prayer likewise, which our Lord taught his disciples, contains no petitions, but what the saints under the Old Testament, were taught to present to Jehovah[z]. Indeed, such is the perfection of the Divine law, that it cannot require, or sustain, any thing short of obedience absolutely perfect. It requires not only that, there be no direct violation of any of its precepts, but that, there be no appearance of trans-

[u] Deut. iv. 2. [w] Matth. vii. 12. Acts xxvi. 22.
[x] John xiii. 34. [y] 1 John ii. 7. [z] Isa. lxiii. 16. Psal. lvii. 11. and cxliii. 10—12. Prov. xxx. 8. Psal. xxv. 11. and xvi. 1.

gressing any of them; no consent of the heart; no inclination, nor affection, to the smallest violation of any; no secret delight in evil, nor desire that it were lawful; but on the contrary, that there be a supreme delight in the purity and perfection, of every one of its commands. This law is despised and dishonoured, if it be not acknowledged to be so perfect, that nothing can be accepted by it, but that which is in all respects perfect. It demands perfection, in the principles, in the parts, in the degrees, and in the perpetuity of obedience. In a work, such is the perfection of it, that it was sufficient to be the *rule*, even of the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ himself.

3. This law is also *spiritual*. The Lawgiver is a spirit, the God of the spirits of all flesh; and he beholds all the inclinations and affections of the soul, as well as all the deeds of the body. His law therefore is spiritual [a], requiring internal, as well as external obedience. It reaches the understanding, will, and affections, with all the other faculties of the soul, as well as all the gestures, words, and actions of the body. It extends, not only to external appearances, words, and works, but to the dispositions, thoughts, principles, motives, and designs of the heart; and requires the spiritual performance, both of internal and external obedience [b]. It requires that, every duty proceed from spiritual principles, such as, union with Christ, faith, love, and every right habit of the soul; that, it be performed in a spiritual manner, that is, according to

[a] Rom. vii. 14.

[b] Heb. iv. 12. Matth. xxii. 37—39. Lev. xix. 17.

a spiritual rule, and in the exercise of the graces of the Spirit; and that, it be directed to spiritual ends, the glory of God in Christ, and the eternal enjoyment of him. Every man is commanded by it, thus "to mind the things of the Spirit," and so to "live and walk in the Spirit[c]."

4. It is a *holy* law. "The law," says the apostle Paul, "is holy, and the commandment holy[d]." The moral law is a fair transcript of the infinite holiness of God's nature, and an authoritative declaration of his will; and it binds all the children of Adam, to perfect holiness of heart and of life. It enjoins every thing that is holy, every thing, which is conformable to those moral attributes and actions of God, which are patterns for our imitation. Since it is intrinsically pure and holy, it gives no *just* occasion to the least motion of sin in the heart; but, on the contrary, it discovers, forbids, and condemns every inordinate affection, every unholy desire. It is the immutable, and eternal, standard of all true holiness, whether of the heart, or of the life: and whilst it is both the rule, and the reason of holiness, its direct tendency is, to encourage and advance it, in every regenerate soul. All the precepts of it are perfectly holy, every way becoming an infinitely holy God to publish, and rational creatures to obey. The Divine law is so holy, that it calls for spotless obedience, not only in the words and actions of the life, but in all the inclinations, thoughts, and motions of the heart. It reaches, not only to the streams of actual transgression, but to the fountain of original sin; and

[c] Rom. viii. 5. Gal. v. 16. [d] Rom. vii. 12.

calls for perfect holiness of nature, as well as of life. Hence the apostle Paul, as soon as he discerned the holiness of it, considered the first motions of irregular desire, even before the will actually consented to them, as sinful, and bitterly bewailed them, as well as firmly resisted them [e].

5. Moreover, it is *perfectly just and equal* [f]. This righteous law, is exactly suited to our frame as reasonable creatures, and to our condition in this world. It requires nothing from us, but what we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbour, and what we, in the first Adam, had sufficient ability to perform. Accordingly the holy Psalmist says, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart [g]." "I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments [h]." The law of God is just and right. Its demands are infinitely equitable. And therefore, to fret against any command of it, or to wish, that it were in the smallest degree relaxed, is unjust, and is a breach of the whole law. Seeing it requires nothing, but what we already owe to God, and nothing, but what we are under infinite, and immutable, obligations to pay to him; our obedience to it, supposing that obedience were perfect, could never merit the smallest blessing from him. Were we, indeed, to perform but a single act of obedience, more than we owed to God, we should thereby, merit some recompense from him. But this it is impossible for us ever to do. It is not the obedience even of a true believer, that

[e] Rom. vii. 7.
[f] Rom. vii. 12.
[g] Psal. xix. 8.
[h] Psal. cxix. 7.

merits the blessings of salvation for him; but only, the meritorious righteousness of Christ imputed to him.

6. The law is *good*, as well as holy and just[i]. The commandments of it are so good, that they require nothing, but what is good in itself, and good for the observers of them. "In keeping of them there is great reward[k]." They enjoin nothing, but what is conducive to the happiness, both of the souls and the bodies of men. "Great peace," says the Psalmist, "have they who love thy law; and nothing shall offend them[l]." The apostle Paul also says, "Glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile[m]." And again, "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully[n]." The chief ingredient, in the happiness of Adam, in innocence, was, his having this law inscribed on his heart. And no man, since the fall, begins to be either good or happy, till this promise begin to be fulfilled to him; "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts[o]." It is this, that makes a man, a good man, and *capable* of performing good works. As the law then is good, desirable, and excellent; it is most unreasonable, as well as sinful, not to love it, and not to delight in performing universal obedience to it.

7. Lastly, This law is *of perpetual obligation*. The precepts of it are indispensable and perpetual[p].

[i] Rom. vii. 12. [k] Psal. xix. 11. [l] Psal. cxix. 165.
[m] Rom. ii. 10. [n] 1 Tim. i. 8. [o] Heb. viii. 10.
[p] Psal. cxix. 89, 144.

They continue, to direct and oblige all men to perfect obedience, not only through all time, but through all eternity. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail[q]." "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled[r]." The law as a covenant of works, will continue not only through time, but through eternity, to bind all who live and die under that covenant; and the law as a rule of life, will continue binding on the spiritual seed of the second Adam, through time and eternity. It is an immutable and an eternal law. Every one of thy righteous judgments," says David, "endureth for ever."

Is the law of the Lord *perfect*, and does it require that our obedience be perfect in its principles, parts, degrees, and continuance? It is *impossible*, then, that *sincere* obedience, can entitle a sinner to eternal life. A man's faith may be sincere, but if it is not perfect, it cannot be a proper condition of life; it cannot procure for him, a right to eternal life. His repentance also may be deep and sincere; but if it is not absolutely perfect, it cannot afford him the smallest title, either to the progress, or the consummation of life eternal[ss]. His obedience, in general, may be sincere; yet if it is not

[q] Luke xvi. 17. [r] Matth. v. 18. [s] Psal. cxix. 160.

[ss] This is not to be understood as implying, That the law, either as a covenant or as a rule, requires either perfect or imperfect faith and repentance, as the *proper* condition of eternal life; but only, That no instances of personal obedience, how *sincere* soever that obedience may be, can ever entitle a sinner to life eternal.

absolutely perfect, it cannot give him the smallest degree of title to eternal salvation. These cannot entitle him, in the smallest degree, to life, either according to the law as a covenant of works, or as a rule of life. They are necessary as parts of salvation, and as means of attaining complete salvation; but they cannot be the *grounds* of a man's title to salvation. Nothing can be the ground of a believer's title to salvation, but the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith, and imputed to him for justification.

Is the moral law of *perpetual obligation?* Then it follows that, as a *covenant of works*, it retains, and will continue throughout eternity, to retain, its whole authority and obligation, over every sinner of mankind who lives and dies under it. In its covenant-form, it stands in full force, and can never be repealed. It will continue, and that through all eternity, to hold the finally impenitent, under both its commanding and its condemning power. They shall remain for ever, under an infinite *obligation*, both to yield perfect obedience to its righteous precepts, and to give infinite satisfaction for their disobedience of them. There is no possible way, in which, a sinner can be freed from the perpetual obligation of the law as a covenant; but by presenting, in the hand of faith, to it, the infinitely perfect, and meritorious, righteousness of the second Adam, as a full answer to all its high demands. When this glorious righteousness, is received by faith, and graciously imputed to a man, the law in its covenant-form, is fully satisfied with respect to *him;* and, in *that form*, it has nothing more to demand from him. He now passes from the obliga-

tion of the covenant of works, and comes under the perpetual obligation of the law as a rule of duty, in the covenant of grace; and he will remain under its infinite obligation, through all eternity. Even the angels in heaven, are under a law, as their eternal rule of duty. And if the holy angels are not without law to God, surely glorified saints, will be under the law to Christ, as the eternal rule of *their* obedience. And so ardent, will their love of this holy and righteous law be, that they will account it their highest honour, and their greatest happiness, to continue eternally, under the obligation of yielding perfect obedience to it. No man sincerely loves it, even in an imperfect degree, but the man, who *hopes* to be under the *eternal obligation* of it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RULES, FOR UNDERSTANDING ARIGHT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

To understand aright, the perfection, spirituality, and great extent, of the Divine law, is necessary to qualify believers, for delighting in it after the inward man, and for performing acceptable obedience to all its precepts. The holy Psalmist, therefore, prayed thus: "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart[u]." "I am a stranger in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me[w]."

[t] Psal. ciii. 20. [u] Psal. cxix. 34. [w] Psal. cxix. 19.

Seeing the ten commandments contain very much in few words, which cannot but render it the more difficult, to apprehend their full meaning; the *rules*, to be carefully observed for understanding them aright, are chiefly the following:

1. Where a duty is required, the *contrary sin is forbidden*[x]; and where a sin is forbidden, the *contrary duty is required*[y]. Every command forbids the sin which is opposite to, or inconsistent with, the duty which it requires. The duties required in the law, cannot be performed, without abstaining from the sins forbidden in it; and the sins forbidden, cannot be avoided, unless the contrary duties be performed. We must, not only cease to do what the commands forbid, but do what they require; otherwise we do not obey them sincerely. A negative holiness is far from being acceptable to God. Every affirmative precept includes a negative one, and every negative command contains an affirmative. Every precept, whether affirmative or negative, has two parts: it requires obedience, and forbids disobedience. The fourth commandment, for instance, whilst it requires us to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," forbids us to profane that holy day. The Lord Jesus, accordingly, comprehends all the negative, as well as affirmative precepts, in these two great affirmative commandments, To love God and our neighbour. It is also remarkable that, where a promise is annexed to a precept, the contrary threatening is included[z]; and that, where a threatening is annexed to a prohibition, the contrary promise is implied[a].

[x] Isa. lviii. 13. [y] Eph. iv. 28. [z] Exod. xx. 12. Prov. xxx. 17. [a] Jer. xviii. 7, 8. Psal. xxiv. 4, 5.

2. Where a duty is required, *every duty of the same kind*, is also required; and where a sin is forbidden, *every sin of the same sort*, is prohibited. Under one duty, all of the same kind are commanded; and under one sin, all of the same sort are forbidden. When the Lord commands us, to "have no other gods before him," he requires us, to know and acknowledge Him, to be the only true God, and our God, and to love, worship, and glorify him accordingly. When he commands us, to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," he requires us, to engage in prayer, praise, hearing the word, receiving the Sacraments, and in all the other duties of that holy day. Where a duty is commanded, the *avowing* of that duty, is required likewise. Believing in Christ, and a profession of faith in him, are enjoined in the same commandment [b]. Where the duties of children to parents, are commanded, not only are all the duties of inferiors, to superiors in every other relation, required, but also all the duties of superiors to inferiors. On the other hand, when the Lord forbids us to kill, he forbids us also to strike, or wound our neighbour, or to harbour malice and revenge against him [c]. When he forbids to commit adultery, he at the same time prohibits fornication, incest, and all impure imaginations, affections, and purposes [d]. Where great sins are expressly forbidden, all the lesser sins of that sort, are forbidden: and they are prohibited under the names of the grosser sins, in order to render them, the more *detestable* and

[b] Rom. x. 10.
[c] Matth. v. 21, 22.
[d] Matth. v. 27, 28.

horrible in our view; as also to shew us, how abominable, even the very least of them is, in the sight of an infinitely holy and righteous God [e].

3. That which is forbidden, is *at no time* to be done; but that which is required, is to be done, only when the Lord affords opportunity. What God forbids, is sin, and is never to be done [f]: what he requires, is always our duty [g]; and yet, every particular duty is not to be performed *at all times* [h]. That which is forbidden, is at all times sinful, and therefore ought never, on any pretence whatever, to be done [i]. That which is required, as it is always our duty, so it is to be performed as often as opportunity is afforded, and as it does not interfere with the performance of our other duties. We are commanded, for instance, to honour our parents; but unless they be alive, or present with us, we have not the opportunity of performing this duty. In the third commandment, we are required to use, in a holy and reverent manner, the names and ordinances of God, especially in all our acts of worship; but we cannot, and should not, be *every moment* employed in acts of immediate worship; for we are commanded to abound in the performance of other duties, equally necessary. Although the affirmative part of every precept, is of as high authority and binding force, as the ne-

[e] Instead of attempting an explanation of each of the ten commandments, which would increase too much the size of this volume, I refer the devout reader to BOSTON's excellent Exposition of them, in his Sermons on our Shorter Catechism.

[f] Rom. iii. 8.
[g] Deut. iv. 8, 9.
[h] Matth. xii. 7.
[i] Gen. xxxix. 9.

gative part; yet, it does not bind us to the performance of *every* particular duty, at *all* times: it obliges us, to be always in a suitable frame for our *present* duty, but not to be always in the actual performance of *every* duty. It binds us to the performance of a particular duty, every time that we are called to perform that duty; every time in which, the performance of it, can glorify God, and the omission of it, dishonour him. There is, however, *one* affirmative precept, which binds us to perform the duty required, at *all* times; namely, the commandment to "love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind[k]." There is no state, nor time, nor place, in which, we can be exempted from the duty of loving God supremely.

4. Whatever we ourselves, are commanded to be, or to do, or to forbear; we are obliged to do all that it is possible for us to do, according to our places and stations in society, *to make others* around us, to be, or do, or forbear the same. We are strictly bound, according to our different stations, to endeavour that, every duty be performed, and every sin be forborne, by all to whom our influence can extend[l]. Accordingly, in the fourth commandment, are these words: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates[m]." Here, the duty both of the servant, and of the stranger,

[k] Matth. xxii. 37—39. Lev. xix. 17.

[l] Gen. xviii. 19. Deut. vi. 6, 7.

[m] Exod. xx. 10.

is required of the master. Whatever sin is forbidden to ourselves, we are forbidden to partake with others in it, either by example, advice, connivance, or by giving them occasion to commit it. "Be not partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure[n]." However free of personal transgressions we may pretend to be; yet we are transgressors of the law, so far as, by connivance or otherwise, we are partakers of the sins of others[o]. What duty soever, others around us are commanded to perform, we are required, by advice, encouragement, prayer, and other helps, to assist them in performing it[p]. How much iniquity, alas, do many even of the saints themselves commit, by not attending more than they usually do, to this rule!

5. The same duty is required, and the same sin is forbidden, in different respects, in *several*, and even in *all* the Divine commands. The transgression of one precept, is virtually a breach of all. They are so intimately connected together, that, if the divine authority be disregarded in any one of them, it is slighted in all[q]. The first commandment, for example, is so closely connected with all the other precepts, that it is obeyed in all our obedience, or disobeyed in all our disobedience, to any one of them. Obedience or disobedience to it, is virtually, obedience or disobedience to the whole law.

6. Where a duty is required, the use of all the *means* of performing it aright, is required; and where a sin is forbidden, every *cause*, and even

[n] 1 Tim. v. 22. [o] Eph. v 11. [p] 2 Cor i. 24.
[q] Col. iii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 10. James ii. 10. 1 John iv. 20.

every *occasion* of it, are prohibited. When chastity in heart, speech, and behaviour, is required, temperance and diligence in our lawful employments, as means of preserving it, are, at the same time, enjoined. On the other hand, when the Lord forbids the profanation of the Sabbath, he at the same time, forbids all the employments and recreations, by which men profane that holy day. When he forbids uncleanness, he at the same time, prohibits drunkenness, gluttony, idleness, or whatever else may be an incitement to that sin. Where he forbids murder, he also prohibits wrath, malice, and revenge, which prompt men to commit that crime[r]. When children are commanded to honour their parents, parents are, in the same command, enjoined, to regard their children with parental affection, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord[s].

7. No sin is at any time to be committed, in order to *avoid or prevent a greater sin.* We must not "do evil, that good may come[t]." The very least sin ought not, on any account whatever, to be committed. None of the dispensations of adorable Providence, lays a man under a *necessity* of sinning. "Let no man then say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man[u]." As no man is allowed by the law, so none is necessitated by the providence, of an infinitely holy and righteous God, to commit one sin, in order to prevent another. We are commanded in

[r] Matth. v. 21, 22. 1 John iii. 15.
[s] Eph. vi. 4.
[t] Rom. iii. 8.
[u] James i. 13.

the law, not only to abstain from all evil, but even "from all *appearance* of evil[w]." But, while no sin must be committed, in order to prevent a greater sin; some duties required, should, as was observed above, give place to other duties.

8. The commandments of the second Table of the law, must *give place* to those of the first, when they *cannot both be observed together*. Our love of our neighbour, for instance, ought to be subjected to our love of God; and we are enjoined to hate, that is, to love in a *less degree*, father and mother, for Christ, when our love of them comes, at any time, in competition with our love of Him[x]. When our love of our nearest relations, and dearest friends, becomes inconsistent with our love of Christ, the former must yield to the latter. We must prefer Christ, and God in Christ, to all the other objects of our esteem and affection[y]. When the commands of our superiors among men, are at any time, contrary to the commandments of the Lord, then, "we are to obey God rather than men[z]." But although our natural duties to men, required in the second Table of the law, must give place to our natural duties to God, required in the first[a]; yet, the *positive* duties enjoined in the first Table, must yield to the *natural* duties required in the second, when they cannot *both* be performed at the same time[b]."

9. In our obedience, we should have a special, and constant respect to *the scope* and *final end*, at which the Lord aims, by all the commandments in

[w] 1 Thess. v. 22. [x] Luke xiv. 26. [y] Matth. x. 37.
[z] Acts iv. 19. [a] Acts v. 29. [b] Hos. vi. 6.

general, or by any one of them in particular. The great end at which, God aims in general, in subordination to his own manifested glory, is perfect *holiness* of heart and life in his people, even as he himself is holy [c]. Whatever obedience, therefore, he enjoins, he requires that it be absolutely perfect; and whatever obedience we perform, we are bound to aim at perfection in it [d]; and to assure ourselves, that in proportion as we fall short of perfection, we sin, and come short of his glory. This rule, in the hand of the Spirit of truth, is of special use, to teach both sinners and saints, the true meaning of every Divine precept. The aim of God, in each of his commandments, is, perfection of holiness or of conformity "to the image of his Son, that he may be the first-born among many brethren [e]." And the perfection in obedience, which he requires, is, as has been hinted above, a perfection of *principle*, that our obedience proceed from "a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from faith unfeigned [f];" a perfection of the *parts* of it, so that it be universal, in respect of all the commands, or of all things written in the book of the law; a perfection of *degrees*, that every part of it, be raised to the very highest degree of conformity to the holy law; and a perfection in respect of *duration*, that from the beginning, to the end of our life, we continue "in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

10. Lastly, The beginning and the end, as well as the sum, of all the commandments, is *love*.

[c] 2 Cor. vii. 1. 1 Pet. i. 15. Rom. viii. 29.
[d] Philip. iii. 14. Matth. v. 48.
[f] 1 Tim. i. 5.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law [g]." "The end of the commandment is love [h]." As all the blessings of God to his people, flow from, and are comprised in, his love to them; so all the duties of man to God, are comprehended in love to Him. The love of God to man, is the sum of the gospel: the love of man to God, is the sum of the law. Love to God as our God, is the sum of what is required in the first Table of the law; and love to our neighbour, is the whole of what is enjoined in the second. The former is called, "The first and great commandment;" and the latter is "like unto it." These two commandments are so closely connected together, that obedience to the one, cannot be performed, without obedience to the other. We cannot love God supremely, unless we love our neighbour as ourselves; nor can we love our neighbour, who was made in the image of God, as ourselves, except we love God who created him in his own image, with supreme affection [i]. All the duties required in the first Table of the law, are but the native expressions of supreme love to the Lord our God; and all the duties enjoined in the second, are only the genuine expressions of sincere love to our neighbour.

Now, Is it so, that our love of our neighbour, is to be subjected or subordinated to our love of God? We may hence learn, *how* we ought to love God, and *how* to love our neighbour. We must love God, *more* than we love ourselves, and love our neighbour, *as* ourselves. We are bound to love

[g] Rom. xiii. 10. [h] 1 Tim. i. 5. [i] 1 John iv. 20.

the Lord our God supremely, or with all the powers of our souls, and to love our neighbour co-ordinately, or as ourselves. To love the Lord our God, according to the commandment, with all our *heart*, is, to love him with a perfect degree of sincerity [k]. To love him with all our *soul*, is, to love him spiritually and affectionately, and that in a perfect degree; and to express our ardent affection to him, by every instance of obedience in which, any faculty of our souls can be exercised. To love him with all our *strength*, is, to love no other amiable object, so much as Him, and none, but in him and for him, or in subordination to him [l]. And to do it with all our *mind*, is, to regard him with an intelligent love, or a superlative esteem; and to love him principally, for his own infinite amiableness, as manifested especially, in the person and work of our adorable Redeemer [m]. The highest degree of love, then, of which man, even in his state of innocence, was capable, is due to our God; but a less degree of it, is due to ourselves and our neighbour. To love our neighbour *as* ourselves, is, to love him in the same *manner*, as we ought to do, ourselves. A lawful and regular love of ourselves, is here implied; for it is made the pattern according to which, we ought to love others. This regular self-love is, an habitual desire and endeavour, always to aim at the happiness of our souls and bodies, in subordination to the glory of God. To love, then, our neighbour as ourselves, is, to love him as constantly, as sincerely, as tenderly, as ar-

[k] Rom. xii. 9.
[l] Luke xiv. 26.
[m] Song i. 3. Philip. iii. 8.

dently, as actively, and as inviolably, as we love ourselves [n]. This love of our neighbour should be expressed, by our doing to him, all that we would, from a well informed judgment, have him to do to us, in the same relations and circumstances. We are required to love all men, with a love of benevolence and beneficence; but, the saints, not only with a love of benevolence, but with a love of complacence and delight [o]. This love of God and of our neighbour, must flow "from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from faith unfeigned [p]." And when it proceeds from these principles, it is "the fulfilling of the law," the essence of true holiness, and "the bond of perfectness." Reader, trust in the Lord Jesus with all thy heart, for all his salvation to thyself in particular, and especially for purity of heart, and peace of conscience; and then, thy faith will work by love.

It is evident from what has been said, that we were all born into the world, *utterly destitute of conformity* to the holiness of God's law. We were "born in iniquity and conceived in sin [q]." We came into the world, entirely destitute of the moral image of God, and wholly under the dominion of natural depravity [r]. The holy law commands us to love God supremely; but we by nature love ourselves supremely. It enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourselves; but we on the contrary hate our neighbour, especially, in relation to the momentous concerns of his immortal soul. The law requires us, to delight supremely in the Lord

[n] Eph. v. 29. [o] Psal. xvi. 3. [p] 1 Tim. i. 5.
[q] Psal. li. 5. [r] Job xi. 12.

our God; but we, instead of this, delight only in sin, or at least, in that which is not God. We are commanded in the law, to "do all to the glory of God;" but we are naturally disposed, to do all to our own glory. These corrupt propensities are native, in the heart of every descendant of Adam, and are directly contrary to the holy nature and law of God[s]. So great is the contrariety, between the holy nature of God as expressed in his law, and the nature of a sinner; that God is said to hate sinners[t], and sinners, to hate him[u]. And no man has attained a true conviction of his sin, but he, whom the Holy Spirit has made to see and feel, that by nature he is a *hater* of God, and of the whole revealed character of God.

Hence it is manifest also, that the *very best actions* of unconverted persons, are *sinful* in the sight of God. Such persons, indeed, do many things that are materially good, but, nothing that is formally good; nothing, from a good principle, in a good manner, and to a good end. All that they do, is done, either directly or indirectly, in opposition to the holy commandments of the Lord; and so, it is sinful and hateful to him[w]. How then can suc performances, atone for their past transgressions, and entitle them to the favour of God, and eternal life? Ah, how deep the infatuation, how great the folly, of relying on our own righteousness, for a title to eternal salvation!

From what has been said, it is evident, that it is a *righteous thing* with God, to require of unregen-

[s] Psal. liii. 1, 3. [t] Psal. v. 5. [u] Rom. viii. 7.
[w] Prov. xv. 8. Rom. viii. 8. Heb. xi. 6.

erate sinners, *what they cannot perform.* He commands them to love him with all their hearts, and so, to perform perfect and perpetual obedience to his righteous law: but, in their state of unregeneracy, they have no moral ability, to perform a single duty according to the commandment [x]. It is infinitely just, however, that the Lord should require of sinners, what they are unwilling, and so, unable to perform; and, that he should condemn them to death, in all its latitude and extent, for not performing it. For, nothing can be more just and reasonable, than that, they should yield *perfect* obedience to *his* righteous law. He gave them, in the first Adam, sufficient ability to perform perfect obedience; and they chose to deprive themselves of it, by their transgression in him, as their federal representative [y]. Besides, they have no inability but what is *voluntary.* They *love* the depravity of their hearts, and *choose* to commit iniquity. Indeed, if the Lord could not justly require of sinners, what they cannot perform; it would inevitably follow, that they could have no need, either that, the Son of God should fulfil all righteousness for them, or that, his Holy Spirit should implant holiness in them. To say then, that God cannot *justly*, require sinners to perform that obedience to him, which, of themselves they are unable to perform, tends to undermine at once, both the law and the gospel.

To conclude: We may hence see that, no influences of the Holy Spirit, but such as are *irresistible*, will suffice to convert a sinner to God, and to the love and practice of sincere obedience to his law.

[x] Rom. v. 6. [y] Eccles. vii. 29. Rom. v. 12, 19.

So strong and inveterate is the corruption, which is in the hearts of unregenerate sinners, that elect sinners do resist the saving operation of the Spirit, as much, and as long as they can; and were it not, that the adorable Spirit is *infinitely efficacious* in his operation, they would all so resist Him, as to hinder him from converting them. An infinitely powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, such as will be sufficient, to conquer all the resistance made to it by sinners; is necessary to change their natures, and to make them willing to believe in Jesus Christ, and return through him, to God as their God. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit, in converting sinners, is in Scripture represented, as "*putting* his laws into their minds, and *writing* them in their hearts," as "*creating* them in Christ Jesus unto good works," as *quickening* and *raising them up* from the dead, and as "*opening their eyes*," and "*calling them* out of darkness into his marvellous light." Hence, they are said to be born of the Spirit, to be new creatures, and to walk in newness of life. This great and wonderful change is indispensably necessary to true conversion. Happy, inexpressibly happy are you, reader, if you be a subject of it! No sooner do you begin to experience this happy change, than you begin, so to believe the gospel, as to have communion with the second Adam, in his righteousness and salvation, and so to obey the law, as to "walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing."

CHAPTER V.

OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

THE word *Gospel* signifies, *Good news*, or, *glad tidings* of salvation to lost sinners of mankind, through that "Saviour who is Christ the Lord[z]." The term, in Scripture, is used in a twofold sense. It is taken in a lax and general meaning, and also in a strict and proper acceptation.

First, It is employed in a *lax* and *general* acceptation. The gospel, in its lax, large, or general meaning, is the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, which, strictly speaking, is a mixture both of law and gospel. It is used, sometimes, to denote the history of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ[a]; sometimes, the New Testament-dispensation of the covenant of grace[b]; sometimes, the preaching of the word of Christ, particularly, of the doctrines and offers of salvation through him[c]; and more frequently, the whole system of revealed truth[d]. The whole of Divine truth, comprising both the law, and the gospel strictly taken, is, in Scripture called *the gospel*; for, in publishing it, the law must be preached, in subservience to the gospel in its strict acceptation. The law as a covenant of works, must be preached to unregenerate sinners; in order to convince them

[z] Luke ii. 10, 11. [a] Mark i. 1. [b] 2 Tim. i. 10.
[c] 1 Cor. ix. 14. [d] Mark i. 14.

of their sin and misery, and to impel them to accept the compassionate Saviour, offered to them in the gospel. The law as a rule of life, must be preached to believers; in order to excite them to trust at all times in Christ, for new supplies of sanctifying grace, and to advance in holy conformity to him. Since the law in its covenant-form, is of special use in the dispensation of the gospel; since the law as a rule of duty, stands in the covenant of grace, and is, to the spiritual seed of Christ, the only rule of acceptable obedience; and since the gospel strictly taken, is the centre in which, all the lines of revelation meet; the whole of Divine revelation is denominated the gospel. The law, so far as I know, is never in Scripture, contrasted with the gospel, in this *large* acceptation of the word, but is rather comprised in it.

Some have thought that, whatever is in the Old Testament, is law, and that, whatever is in the New, is gospel. But this is such a mistake, as discovers great ignorance of the sacred Oracles. The law, and the gospel in its strict and proper sense, are intermingled with each other, both in the Old Testament, and in the New. Moses and the Prophets, often published the gospel, as well as the law. Christ and his Apostles, on the other hand, frequently preached the law, together with the gospel. As Moses wrote of Messiah, and so published the gospel, though he principally promulgated the law to the Israelites; so, the Lord Jesus and his Apostles, explained and urged the law, though they chiefly employed themselves in preaching the

gospel. If by the gospel, we mean, the whole of that doctrine which was delivered by our Lord and his Apostles; it is manifest that the duties of the law, are more clearly explained, and more strongly enforced in the gospel, than ever they were, by Moses and the prophets. And therefore, this part of the gospel may well be styled, "The commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour," and "the perfect law of liberty." An Apostle informs us that, the new covenant or testament was established, *or*, brought into the form of a law, on better promises[e]. The gospel, in its large acceptation, contains the purest and fullest system of morals, that ever has been presented to the world. It reveals the infinitely glorious perfections of God; for "he who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him." It affords, at the same time, plain and affecting discoveries of a future state. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ," says the apostle Paul, "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel[f]."

The gospel in this point of view, contains *precepts*, all the precepts, that the Lord ever gave to the children of men; all the precepts, that are to be found in the whole compass of Divine revelation, and summed up in the ten commandments. It comprehends, not only the commands to believe, to repent, and to perform new obedience, but all the other commandments of God to men; so that every precept in the word of God, is a precept of

[e] Heb. viii. 6. [f] 2 Tim. i. 10.

the gospel in its lax and general meaning. Accordingly, the apostle Paul informs us that, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey* not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ[g]." He also says of them, who heard the gospel from himself and the other apostles, That "they have not all *obeyed* the gospel[h]." And the apostle Peter, "If judgment first begin at us, what shall the end be of them who *obey* not the gospel of God[i]?" By the gospel, in these passages, is meant the whole word of God, comprehending both the law, and the gospel strictly so called. If, therefore, we exhort one another to obey the *precepts of the gospel*, we certainly should, in order to prevent error, inform each other, at the same time, that we do not mean, the gospel in its strict sense, which contains *no* precepts; but, the gospel in its lax and general acceptation, which comprises *all* the precepts which the Lord hath given to the sons of men.

Secondly, The term, in Scripture, is also used in its *strict and proper* meaning. The gospel strictly taken, signifies Good news, glad tidings, or a joyful message. It is the joyful tidings of a free salvation, through Jesus Christ, to sinners of mankind[k]; or, it is a revelation and exhibition of the covenant of grace, to men. The gospel reveals to us, what the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, have done for us; what inestimable blessings, they have provided for us, and are willing to impart to

[g] 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. [h] Rom. x. 16. [i] 1 Pet. iv. 17.
[k] Matth. xi. 5. Luke ii. 10, 11. Rom. x. 15.

us; how fully and freely, these are offered to us; and how they are to be received and enjoyed, as gifts of infinitely free and sovereign grace. Now the gospel, in this point of view, comprises the following particulars:

1. It contains the *doctrines* of grace, or the doctrinal declarations of God, concerning the redemption of lost sinners; concerning his counsel of peace, and also his covenant of grace, in the source, the Parties, the making, the conditions, the promises, and the administration of it; concerning the Lord Jesus, the only Mediator of it, in his person, offices, relations, and estates; concerning the Holy Spirit, as the Quickener, Enlightener, Sanctifier, and Comforter, of elect sinners, according to it; and, concerning the inestimable blessings promised in it. This is the sum of all the doctrinal declarations of the glorious gospel. It is a declaration or publication, of the free grace of God to sinners of mankind, manifested in his redemption of them by Jesus Christ; and it is the best tidings, that ever have reached their ears. It is by his gospel, that the great Redeemer "saith to the prisoners, Go forth; and to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves [l]." By enabling convinced and disquieted sinners, to believe with application to themselves, the doctrines of the gospel, "He gives them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness [m]." That joyful message, Christ was anointed to preach, angels brought to the shepherds, and the apostles, evangelists, and ministers of Christ, published to

[l] Isa. xlix. 9. [m] Isa. lxi. 3.

the world. The gospel then is glad tidings of good things. No tidings were ever so *joyful*, as those which are announced in the gospel; and no benefits were ever so *good*, as those which are exhibited in it. At the same time, no man will ever love, or so much as understand rightly, a single doctrine of the gospel, unless he see and feel that, as a sinner he is utterly undone. It is to men as sinners, that "the word of this salvation is sent." No doctrine deserves to be called *gospel*, but that which makes the adorable Redeemer, "all in all," the "Alpha and Omega" in the redemption of a sinner. Of such high importance, is the doctrine of our Redeemer's Divine *Sonship*, that the evangelist Mark begins his account of the gospel [n], and the apostle Paul began his ministry of it, with that grand article [o]. And so fundamental, is the doctrine of Christ's consummate *righteousness*, for the justification of believers, that the same Apostle says of the gospel, "That it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith [p]." The word of the gospel, which the apostle Peter spake to the Gentiles, that they might believe, was the doctrine of peace by Jesus Christ, with remission of sins through his name, to be received by faith [q]. The gospel in this point of view, differs so much from the law as a covenant, as to be the very reverse of it.

2. The gospel strictly taken, comprises also *all the promises* of the covenant of grace, as included

[n] Mark. i. 1.
[o] Acts ix. 20.
[p] Rom. i. 16, 17.
[q] Acts x. 36. and xv. 7.

in the great and comprehensive promise of ETERNAL LIFE. Every promise of that gracious covenant, belongs to the gospel. The gospel, in the proper acceptation of it, consists of free and absolute promises of grace and glory; or, it includes a free and gracious promise of justification, and eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. It contains the promises of faith and repentance, and, indeed, of all the other blessings of the everlasting covenant. The gospel after the fall, was revealed in the form of a free and absolute promise of a Saviour, with salvation in him, to lost sinners of mankind. It was then promised, "That the seed of the woman, should bruise the head of the serpent[r]." The gospel was preached to Abraham also, under the form of an absolutely free promise. "In thee and in thy Seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed[s]. In the gospel, salvation from sin, from the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, as well as restoration to fellowship with God, conformity to him, and the eternal enjoyment of him, is graciously promised in Christ, to all who cordially believe in him. The Lord promises in his gospel, that he will give his Holy Spirit to elect sinners, to quicken their dead souls, to enlighten their dark minds, to enable them to believe in Jesus, to repent of their sins after a godly sort, to love, obey, and enjoy him now, and to attain the perfect fruition of him for evermore. In the gospel, as preached under the Old Testament, were promises of the coming of Messiah in the human nature; and in the same gospel, as

[r] Gen. iii. 15. [s] Gen. xii. 3. and xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 8.

preached under the New, are promises of the coming of the Spirit, or of Christ's coming in a greater measure of spiritual influences. These promises are, in the gospel, presented or *offered* to sinners in common, and are *made* and performed to such sinners as believe.

The gospel, in this its strict and proper sense, seeing it is the form of Christ's *testament*, which consists of absolute and free promises of salvation by him, contains *no precepts*. It commands nothing. It does not enjoin us, even to believe and repent; but—it declares to us, what God in Christ as a God of grace, has done, and what he promises still to do, for us, and in us, and by us. Every requirement of duty, all precepts, those to believe and repent, not excepted, belong to the moral law; which binds the new duty upon us, the moment, that the gospel exhibits the new object. Indeed, if but a single instance of duty, owing by the reasonable creature to God, were not, either expressly, or by consequence, commanded in the moral law, that *Divine* law would be so far defective: it would *not be a perfect law*. But, in the Oracles of truth, we read that, "the law of the Lord is perfect [t]," and that, "his commandment is exceeding broad [u]." The Divine law, then, being perfect, cannot but reach to every condition of the creature, and require of him *every* duty. When therefore God, in the gospel, graciously promises to elect sinners, faith, repentance, and eternal life; the law, which commands every duty, obliges them, in common with all other sinners who

[t] Psal. xix. 7. [u] Psal. cxix. 96.

hear the gospel, cordially to believe, and trust, and plead those promises. It binds them, to trust those promises especially, and to receive the fulfilment of them, in the order in which the gospel exhibits them; to exercise faith, in order to the exercise of true repentance, and to exercise faith and repentance daily, in order to be *prepared* for the consummation of eternal life. Whilst every Divine promise, then, belongs to the gospel of God, and none of them, to his law; every Divine precept, is contained in his law, and none of them, in his gospel, strictly taken.

3. The gospel, in its proper acceptation, contains likewise God's *gracious offers* of Christ, in his person, righteousness, fulness, offices, and relations, and of Himself in Christ, to sinners of mankind in common[w]. It comprehends also, his offer of all his promises in and with Christ, to sinners indefinitely[x]. Hence we commonly style these offers, *gospel-offers;* because they form a main and special part of the gospel.—"This is the record," says the apostle John, "that God hath *given* to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son[y]." That God hath given to us *in offer*, eternal life in and with his Son, is the record which he hath given of his Son. It is the sum, or at least a *leading* part, of the testimony of God concerning his Son. As the gospel, then, cannot be published faithfully, unless the unlimited offer be declared to all who hear it; so, it cannot be cordially believed, except the

[w] Isa. xlii. 6, 7. and lv. 4. John iii. 16. and vi. 32.

[x] 2 Cor. i. 20. Acts ii. 39. Heb. iv. 1.

[y] 1 John v. 11.

gracious offer, and all that is offered, be accepted, and received as a gift of infinitely free grace. Whilst all duties, are commanded in the law, all privileges and blessings, are offered in the gospel, and while the former, are required of all, the latter, are presented to all. Christ, and all the blessings of his great salvation are, in the gospel, offered freely, fully, presently, and particularly, and that to sinners of mankind in common; and *as* they are offered, *so*, must they be received by sinners. The ministers of the gospel, are authorized by the Lord Jesus, to "preach the gospel to *every* creature[z];" that is, to publish the full and free offer of himself, and of his righteousness and salvation, to every rational creature, every son and daughter of Adam, to whom they may have access to speak. And it is, indeed, good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all* people, That "to *us*" sinners of the human race, "this Child is *born*, this Son is *given*[a]." The receiving of Christ by faith, supposes a previous offering or giving of him, to hearers of the gospel, in order to afford them a warrant to receive him. As the raining of the manna, about the camp of Israel in the wilderness, is called a *giving* of it, *prior* to their eating of it; so the gospel offer of Christ, is styled a *giving* of him, *previous* to a sinner's reception of him by faith[b]. Indeed, it is as necessary a part of the glorious plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, that he be given in offer *before* believing, as, that he be given in possession *in* and *after* believing.

4. Lastly, The gospel strictly taken, includes

[z] Mark xvi. 15. [a] Isa. ix. 6. [b] John vi. 31, 32.

God's infinitely gracious and tender *invitations*, to sinners of mankind in common, to accept his offers of a Saviour, and of salvation by him. In the gospel, he graciously calls, and with inexpressible earnestness entreats, men to come as sinners, and receive all that he has offered to them, on the warrant of his authentic offer of it. He earnestly invites and urges them to *believe* that the Lord Jesus Christ, with his righteousness and salvation, is graciously offered to *them*, and so to *trust* in him for all their salvation[c]. Those invitations, when considered as *calls*, to perform the duties of believing and repenting, belong to the law; but, when viewed as expressions of the *readiness*, or *willingness* of God, to bestow salvation on sinners, and, as affording them, an additional warrant to trust in the compassionate Saviour for it, they form a part of the gospel. No man believes the gospel cordially, until, convinced of his sinfulness and misery, he believe with application to himself, those invitations, and upon the warrant of them, trust in the Lord Jesus, for all salvation to himself in particular. For the gracious invitations of the gospel, equally as the direct offers of it, are addressed to every sinner of mankind, who hears the joyful sound of it. As for the commands to believe and repent, they, as I hinted above, belong *entirely* to the law. These commands, when given to unregenerate sinners, belong to the law as a covenant of works; and when given to believers,

[c] Prov. viii. 4. and ix. 4, 5. Isa. lv. 1—3. Matth. xi. 28—30. Rev. iii. 17, 18, 20. and xxii. 17.

to persevere in believing and repenting, they belong to the law as a rule of life.

The gospel in its proper acceptation, as comprising the doctrines, promises, and offers, of a free salvation, with invitations to accept these offers, is in Scripture, styled, "the *gospel of God.*" He devised and appointed it in all its parts. It contains, the declarations and promises of his redeeming mercy; the gracious offers of himself in Christ, to sinners of mankind, to be their God and Father; and it affords the most illustrious displays of all his perfections, and especially, of his glorious grace, in the salvation of such as believe[d]. It is also called, "the *gospel of Christ.*" He is the glorious Author, the principal Messenger and Preacher, the blessed subject and end of it; in whom all its doctrines and promises are yea and amen, to the glory of God[e]. It is denominated, "the gospel of *the grace of God*[f]:" for it proceeds from his free favour and good will to men; it manifests the exceeding riches of his grace, and the kindness of his love; and it is the means by which, he graciously communicates the undeserved blessings of salvation, to sinful men. "The *gospel of peace,*" is another of its characters[g]. It flows from God as reconciled in Christ, and reconciling sinners to himself. By means of it, the peace of God is published to men; and it is the means of reconciling their hearts to him as the God of peace, and to one another as friends, and children, and heirs of him. It is also called, "the *gospel of salvation*[h].

[d] Rom. i. 1. [e] Rom i 16. [f] Acts xx. 24.
[g] Eph. vi. 15. [h] Eph. i. 13.

For it reveals, promises, and offers salvation; and, in the hand of the adorable Spirit, it is the instrument of applying the great salvation of Jesus Christ, to the souls of lost sinners. It is styled likewise, "the *gospel of the kingdom*[i]." For, it is issued from the royal authority of Christ the King of Zion, is proclaimed in his church, and is the means of bringing rebels and enemies, first, into his kingdom of grace, and afterwards, into his kingdom of glory. Another of its qualities is, that it is a "*glorious gospel*[k]." It affords the most illustrious displays of the infinitely glorious perfections, purposes, favours, mercies, and truths, of God in Christ; the brightest discoveries of the glory of Him, who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and it is the means of his bringing many sons and daughters to glory. In a word, it is denominated, "the *everlasting gospel*[l]." It continues to be preached, heard, and believed, from the beginning to the end of time, and the inestimable blessings exhibited in it, will continue to be enjoyed by the saints, through all eternity.

From what has here been advanced, it will be obvious to the attentive reader, that there is a great difference between the gospel *in itself*, and *in its dispensation* by Jesus Christ. If the gospel be considered in its large acceptation, or, as dispensed by the Lord Jesus, the Messenger of the covenant; legal precepts and threatenings are comprised, and dispensed in it. A dreadful sanction is

[i] Matth. iv. 23. [k] 1 Tim. i. 11. [l] Rev. xiv 6.

contained in it, in order that, none may presume to turn the grace of it into licentiousness. On the other hand, if it be viewed in itself, or in its strict and proper meaning, it has neither precepts nor threatenings; but, as was observed above, it is an exhibition of the covenant of grace, to sinners of mankind, or good tidings of great joy, to all people. Such expressions as the following, are gospel in the strict sense of the word: Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification:" "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." But on the other hand, such expressions as these, are gospel considered in its dispensation to the sons of men: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." In these and similar passages, the command to believe on the Lord Jesus, and the denunciation of Divine wrath against all who believe not, do not belong to the gospel in itself, or strictly taken; but they belong to the external dispensation of it to sinners. In the dispensation of the gospel, the law and the gospel are dispensed together. The law is promulgated in subservience to the gospel, and therefore, it is included in the dispensation of the gospel. The gospel strictly taken, is one thing; and the precept

and threatening in the dispensation of it, are another.

Do we read in Scripture, that unbelievers *obey not* the gospel? We are not from this to suppose that, the gospel in its proper meaning, is *a law;* but that, in all such passages, it is to be understood, not in its strict, but in its large acceptation, as comprising both law and gospel.

Does the gospel in its large or extended sense, include the law, the *same* law, that was given to man at the beginning? Hence, it is manifest that, Christ as Mediator gives *no new law*, either to saints or sinners, under the gospel. He indeed said to his disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another[m]." But this is not the command of a *new law*, and on that account styled new; for, "it is an old commandment which we had from the beginning[n]." But it is called *new*, because it is a most excellent one; because it is more clearly and fully explained, than before; because it is to be kept in a new manner, or "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;" and, because it is enforced by a new motive and pattern: for Christ says,—"As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." He does not here say to his disciples, 'Ye shall love your neighbour merely as yourselves, but—As I have loved you.' The Lord Jesus, then, has not purchased, nor published, a new law of grace to sinners, in which, faith, repentance, and sincere obedience to it, are made the condi-

[m] John xiii. 34. [n] 1 John ii. 7. and 2 John 5.

tions of justification and eternal life. There is a deep silence throughout the Oracles of truth, with regard to any new law of easier terms, or any new conditions of justification and salvation. We read, indeed, That Christ the last Adam, " fulfilled all righteousness " for his spiritual seed, and, " That by his obedience, shall many be made righteous ;" but nowhere in the word of God, ' That he purchased a new law of grace for them, according to which, they might fulfil a justifying righteousness for themselves; and according to which, sincerity might be accepted, instead of perfection of obedience.'

Hence it is also manifest that, if any good quality or work of ours, were made the *condition* of our justification or title to eternal life; this would turn the covenant of grace, exhibited in the gospel, into a *covenant of works.* The covenant of grace, revealed and offered to sinners in the gospel, is the only covenant according to which, a sinner can be justified and entitled to life eternal. It is absolutely impossible that he can be justified, according to the broken covenant of works. But, were any graces, or acts, or works of his, the proper conditions of his justification; the covenant of grace, would be as much a covenant of works, as ever the covenant made with Adam, was. The condition of Adam's covenant, was perfect obedience; and, according to this imaginary law of easier terms, the conditions of the covenant of grace, are sincere faith and sincere obedience. But, it was far more easy for Adam, in his estate of innocence, to perform the condition of perfect obedience; than it is for an impotent sinner, or even for the holiest

saint, to perform that of sincere faith and obedience. The terms of the new covenant, according to that scheme, would, instead of being more mild, be more rigorous and difficult, than those of the old. The condition of the one covenant, would be works, as well as that of the other; for works are still works, whether they be perfect, or sincere. All indeed who, according to the covenant of grace, attain justification, are justified by faith; but, it is one thing to be justified *by* faith, as merely the instrument of justification; and another, to be justified *for* faith, as an act, or work, affording a *title* to justification. It is one thing, for faith as an act of obedience, and as being seminally all sincere obedience, to *give* a title to justification; and a very different thing, for faith as a mean or instrument, to *receive* a title to it. Faith, according to the gospel, gives no manner of title, to the smallest blessing of the everlasting covenant; but it receives the surety-righteousness of the second Adam, which gives a full title to every one of them [o]. It *gives* possession of nothing, in that gracious covenant; but it *takes* possession of every thing.

From what has been said, we may see, when a man's obedience to the law, is *evangelical.* His obedience is spiritually good and acceptable to God, or in other words, is evangelical; when he performs it, from faith and love, from union with Christ, and justification for his righteousness, as the *principles* of it; when he performs it, not to the law as a covenant of works, but to the law,

[o] Rom. v. 18.

in the hand of Christ, as a rule of duty; when he yields it, not *for* life, but *from* life; not in the strength of nature, nor of grace already received, but in the strength of "the grace that is in Christ Jesus," trusting that Christ, according to the promise, affords him continual supplies of grace; and, when he performs it, chiefly for the glory of Christ, and of God in Christ. It is evangelical obedience, when a man performs it, not, to recommend him to the favour of God, but, in the *faith* of God's favour; not, that it may be his justifying righteousness, but, that it may be a continued expression of adoring gratitude, for the gift of his Redeemer's righteousness; not, that it may dispose the Lord to become his God, but, because He is already his God and Father. Such obedience only as that, is agreeable to the gospel of Christ.

Is the *whole* of Christ's salvation, offered in the gospel to sinners? Then, salvation from *the law as a covenant of works*, is tendered to them. In the declarations and offers of the blessed gospel, the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ, which has not only answered all the demands of the law as a covenant, but "has magnified the law and made it honourable," is presented to them. In the gospel, they are also invited to receive the gift of that glorious righteousness, against which, the utmost rigour of the violated law, can offer no objection; because it is the righteousness of Him who is God, as well as man. When they are enabled to accept the gift of it, and to rely with humble confidence on it, for all their title to justification and eternal life; it is imputed to them, and they are so justified in the sight of God, as to

be set free from all the demands of the law, in its covenant-form. And when, by means of the gospel, they are thus delivered from the dominion of the law as a covenant, they are, in consequence, saved from the dominion of sin. Well may the glorious gospel, then, be styled "The gospel of our salvation[p];" for, by being in the hand of the Holy Spirit, the means of delivering us from the law in its covenant-form, which is "the *strength* of sin," it becomes the means of our salvation from the *power* of sin.

Are the offers and invitations of the gospel, addressed to all in common, who are the hearers of it? Then, no man believes the gospel with his heart, unto righteousness, except he believe the declarations, offers, and invitations of it, *with application to himself.* So long as a sinner refuses, to believe these with application, or, to believe that they are addressed to him in particular, he continues to reject the compassionate Saviour, and to make God a liar[q]. Whatever his profession of religion may be, he remains under the dominion of unbelief, and under condemnation to eternal punishment. The gospel is, the doctrine of free and sovereign grace; and it is to be preached to every creature, descended from Adam. The righteousness and salvation, revealed and offered in it, then, are free to every human creature, to whom it is preached; and it is the first or principal *duty* of every sinner of the human race, to accept the gracious offer, and to rely on the righteousness of the Divine Redeemer, for all his title to eternal life. It is only they,

[p] Eph. i. 13. [q] 1 John v. 10, 11.

therefore, who *receive* Christ Jesus, and trust in his name, that shall have life through his name; and it is only they, who "*receive* abundance of grace, and of the *gift* of righteousness, that shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

To conclude: Is the reader desirous to know, whether he be *experimentally* acquainted with the *grace* of the gospel, or not? Let him pray, that the Lord may examine and prove him, and then, let him put such questions as these, to himself: 'Do I know spiritually, and believe cordially, the doctrines of this glorious gospel? Do I spiritually discern the excellence, and suitableness, of the plan of redemption exhibited in the gospel; and do I heartily approve, so far as I know them, all the parts of that wonderful scheme? Do I heartily comply with the invitations, and accept the offers, of the gospel? Do I frequently endeavour to embrace and trust the promises of it, and do I place the confidence of my heart in the Lord Jesus, for *all* the salvation, which is offered and promised in it? Do I so love the gospel, as to delight in reading, and hearing, and meditating on it? Do I love and admire the gospel, because it is the doctrine, the only doctrine "which is according to godliness;" or because it is the only mirror, in which, believers so contemplate the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as to be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord?" And do I find that, under the transforming and consoling influence of the gospel, I in some measure delight in the law of God, after the inward man, and run in the way of *all* his commandments?' If the reader can answer these ques-

tions in the affirmative, he may warrantably conclude, that he has attained, in some happy measure, that supernatural, and experimental, knowledge of the glorious gospel, which is the beginning of eternal life in the soul, and is inseparably connected with evangelical holiness, in all manner of conversation: and his duty is, in the faith of the promise, to grow daily in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and never to be moved away from the hope of the gospel. But, if he cannot answer so much as one of them in the affirmative, he ought to conclude, that he is yet a stranger to the grace of the gospel; and, instead of yielding to despair, he should without delay, come as a *sinner* to the Lord Jesus, who is given for a light to the Gentiles, that he may be God's salvation unto the end of the earth; and, upon the warrant of the unlimited grant, he should trust in Him for all the salvation promised in the gospel.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE USES OF THE GOSPEL, AND OF THE LAW IN SUBSERVIENCE TO THE GOSPEL.

THE gospel, in its strict and proper sense, is of *great and manifold use*, both to sinners and to saints. I shall here point out only some of its uses.

SECT. I. *Of the principal uses of the* GOSPEL.

THE gospel in its strict acceptation, is, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, of special use,

1. To *reveal* Christ, and God in him as reconciled, and as reconciling sinners of mankind to himself. The great use of the gospel is, to make Christ known to lost sinners, as the only, and the all-sufficient Saviour; to reveal Him to them, in his infinitely glorious person, as God-man and Mediator; in his surety-righteousness, for their justification before God; in his immeasurable fulness of the Spirit, for their sanctification and consolation; and, in his saving offices, and endearing relations to all who believe in him. It serves to represent to them, how Jesus has loved them, what he has done and suffered for them, and what blessings of salvation, he has purchased for them, and is ready to dispense to them[r]. It is of use also to reveal to them, God as reconciled in him, and as reconciling them to himself by him[s]. Hence the manifold doctrines, offers, and promises of the gospel, are in Scripture, styled "the manifold wisdom of God[t]." They clearly shew, that God has devised the scheme of our redemption, with such astonishing wisdom; that our salvation is all of grace, and all of merit, all of mercy, and all of justice; that our iniquities are forgiven, and yet the punishment due for them is inflicted, that the ungodly who believe are justified, and yet ungodliness is condemned; and, that salvation is freely bestowed, and after

[r] 1 Cor. i. 24. and ii. 2. 1 Tim. iii. 16.
[s] 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 6. and v. 18—20. [t] Eph. iii. 10.

all, the demands of law and justice are fully answered.

2. It is the gospel, which also *discloses* to sinners, the *covenant of grace*, into which, the Father and the Son as last Adam, with the infinite approbation of the Holy Spirit, have entered, for the salvation of such sinners as believe. Sinful men cannot be otherwise saved, than by being enabled, so to take hold of that everlasting covenant, by faith, as to come into the bond of it. This, however, they cannot do, unless they be made so to know it, as to discern spiritually, the reality, glory, and suitableness of it, to their miserable condition as lost sinners. But it is the gospel only, coming to them, "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," that reveals this gracious covenant to them; and that shews them, how they may be so instated in it, as to possess and enjoy the blessings of salvation. They could never, according to the plan established in the counsel of peace, have known that eternal contract, but by the revelation of it in the everlasting gospel. It is by the gospel, accompanied with the illuminating influences of his Holy Spirit, that the Lord Jesus the messenger of the covenant, shews elect sinners his covenant [u].

3. It serves likewise, the highly important purpose of *discovering* to sinners, their *warrant* to trust in Christ Jesus, for complete salvation. In the blessed gospel, Christ, and God in Christ, are freely offered to sinful men, and men are graciously invited as sinners, to receive the offer, and to intrust the whole affair of their salvation, to Christ

[u] Psal. xxv. 14.

and to God in Him [w]. By the gospel, they are informed that, the Lord Jesus offers himself, with all the inestimable blessings of the everlasting covenant, to them; and that, he graciously invites and urges them as sinners, to accept him as their all-sufficient Saviour, and to place the confidence of their hearts in him, for salvation from sin and wrath. Were they not to know, that a Divine warrant is thereby afforded them, to receive and trust in the Saviour, for their salvation; it would be as great presumption in any of them, as it would be, in a fallen angel, to attempt trusting that He would save him. But, by the declarations, offers, calls, and promises, of the word of grace, an ample warrant is afforded them as sinners of mankind, to trust in the Divine Saviour, and so, to take possession of his great salvation. And it is by the gospel, accompanied by the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, that their warrant is revealed, that their full right of access to the compassionate Saviour, is disclosed to them, and that he manifests himself to be so near them, as to be within their reach [x]. O how great is the importance and utility, of the gracious offers and invitations of the blessed gospel, to convinced and despondent sinners! By these, under the illuminating influences of the adorable Spirit, they see that, it is lawful and warrantable for them, to come *as sinners*, and to intrust, with humble and strong confidence, the eternal salvation of their souls to the Lord Jesus.

4. The gospel is the *means* which the Holy Spirit employs, for *communicating* the grace of Christ

[w] John vi. 32. Isa. lv. 1—4. [x] Rom. x. 6—8.

to elect sinners; in order to produce that *change* of their state, and of their nature, to which they have been chosen. It is by means of the gospel, that, in the moment of regeneration, the Spirit of Christ and his grace enter, and take possession of the hearts of God's elect. Sinners who are born again, "are born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever [y]." Hence the Psalmist, directing his speech to Messiah, says, "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power [z]." The gospel, accordingly, is called, "the spirit which giveth life [a]," "the grace of God that bringeth salvation [b]," and "the power of God unto salvation [c]." By the gospel, God exerts the exceeding greatness of his power, in quickening, and converting sinners to himself. It is by means of it, that he enlightens their minds, renews their wills, rectifies and sanctifies their affections, and so makes them partakers of a new and holy nature. Hence, the apostle Paul styles it, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which made him free from the law of sin and death [d]."

5. The gospel is also the *instrument*, by which, the Holy Spirit implants the *principle and habit of true faith*, in the hearts of elect sinners. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God [e]." The Spirit renders the reading, and especially the

[y] 1 Pet. i. 23.
[z] Psal. cx. 2, 3.
[a] 2 Cor. iii. 6.
[b] Tit. ii. 11.
[c] Rom. i. 16.
[d] Rom. viii. 2.
[e] Rom. x. 17.

hearing of the gospel, effectual means of working faith in the hearts of sinners; by which, they believe with application the gracious offers of Christ, and of his righteousness and fulness, and trust in him for salvation to themselves in particular. It is by means of the gospel, which the apostle Paul styles, "the word of faith[f]," that the Spirit of Christ, implants and increases precious faith, in the souls of his elect[g]. Is it then the believer's desire, that he may make swift progress, in the habit and exercise of that living faith, by which, he gives glory to God, and receives grace and glory from him? Let him, in humble reliance on the promise, and on the Spirit of faith, read, hear, and meditate frequently on, the glorious gospel.

6. It is by means of the gospel, that the Holy Spirit *continues to apply Christ*, with his righteousness and fulness, to the hearts of believers, for increasing their *sanctification and consolation.* They are said in Scripture, to be "sanctified through the truth[h];" "to be clean, through the word which Christ hath spoken unto them[i];" and to have "their hearts purified by faith[k]." The apostle Paul presented this prayer, for the saints at Ephesus: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, - - - that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God[l]." And he informed them, That they were "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, &c[m]." It is in proportion, then, as the saints are enabled, to believe with applica-

[f] Rom. x. 8. [g] John xx. 31. [h] John xvii. 17, 19.
[i] John xv. 3. [k] Acts xv. 9. [l] Eph. iii. 17, 19.
[m] Eph. ii. 20—22.

tion to themselves, the offers and promises of the gospel, and to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, that they advance in holiness and comfort. And, it is "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, that they all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ[n]."

7. The gospel is a mean of *increasing* the knowledge, of *restraining* the depravity, and of *reforming* the external conduct, of many unregenerate sinners; and so, of qualifying them for being, in various respects, *serviceable* to the people of God around them. It is often a mean, under the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, of rendering many unregenerate men, less hurtful, and more useful, to the saints of God, than otherwise they would be. As the gospel is a special mean, of the renewing influences of the Spirit, in holy men; so is it, of his restraining influence, on hypocrites and wicked men[o]. Now this restraining or providential influence, is of inexpressible importance to the saints. For, as no saint could continue to live in communion with Christ, and with other saints, without sanctifying grace, and that daily communicated to *him;* so neither could he live among sinners, unless restraining influence were afforded to *them.* He ought, therefore, in a very high degree, to esteem and love the gospel; not only, because it is the means of special grace to himself, but, because it is the vehicle of common influence, to the unregenerate around him.

[n] Eph. iv. 13.

[o] Matth. xiii. 20—22. 2 Pet. ii. 20. Heb. vi. 4, 5.

8. Lastly, It is by means of the gospel, that *the glory of Christ and of God in him, is manifested to men and angels.* It is in and by the gospel, that the brightest displays "of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," are graciously afforded [p]. In the gospel as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord Jesus, and of all the Divine perfections, as harmonizing, and mingling their refulgent beams, in the redemption of sinners by him, is seen, contemplated, and adored [q]. It is the gospel strictly taken, that, under the illuminating influences of the blessed Spirit, serves to discover to the eye of faith, "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." There, the glory of the great Redeemer's person and work, shines forth, in the view of holy angels and redeemed men, with the most resplendent lustre. Hence the gospel is called, "the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God [r]," and "the glorious gospel of the blessed God [s]." While the Lord affords far more illustrious displays of his infinite glory in redemption, than in any other of his works; all the transcendent displays of it in redemption, which he makes, are in and by the gospel.

SECT. II. *Of the USES of the MORAL LAW, in its subservience to the gospel.*

THE law, both as a covenant of works, and as a rule of life, is, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, of special use, and that, both to sinners and to saints.

[p] 2 Cor. iv. 4—7.
[q] 2 Cor. iii. 18.
[r] 2 Cor. iv. 4.
[s] 1 Tim. i. 11.

Though righteousness and eternal life cannot, since the fall, be obtained by a man's own obedience to the moral law, because "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified[t];" yet it is of manifold use to men. "The law is good," says the apostle Paul, "if a man use it lawfully[u];" that is, if he use it *suitably*, to the design for which it is given him, and to the state in which he is, either as an unbeliever, or as a believer; or, in other words, if he improve it as a covenant, for urging him to receive Jesus Christ, and improve it as a rule, for directing him how to walk in Christ.

THE law is of use to *men in general.*

1. To *discover* to them, the *holy nature and will* of God; or to shew them, the infinite holiness and rectitude of his nature and will. Jehovah said to the Israelites in the wilderness, "I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy[w]." "The law is holy," says the apostle Paul, "and the commandment holy, and just, and good[x]."

2. It serves to *inform* them of their *duty* to God, to themselves, and to others around them; and to *oblige* them, by his sovereign authority, to perform it. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God[y]?"

3. It is of use likewise to *restrain* men from much sin. By its peremptory commands, and awful threatenings, it serves in some measure to keep

[t] Gal. ii. 16. [u] 1 Tim. i. 8. [w] Lev. xi. 44.
[x] Rom. vii. 12. [y] Mic. vi. 8.

them in awe, and to fright them from committing many external acts of sin; in which, they otherwise would freely indulge themselves. It is of use, by its terrible denunciations, to curb those, who, destitute of every good principle, would rush forward to all manner of sin; and to deter them, through fear of punishment, from many gross enormities. In this view, it serves as a curb, to hold sinners within the limits of external decency, and to prevent the world, from becoming a scene of robbery and blood. Accordingly our Apostle says, "That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, &c[z]."

4. The law conduces also to *excite*, and *encourage* sinners to the practice of virtue, from the consideration that, even the external resemblance of true virtue, will often be rewarded with exemption from many outward calamities, and with the possession of many outward advantages[a]. Nay, it tends to impel sinners to virtuous actions, even from the consideration that, in the event of their performance of them, and afterward, of their dying in an unregenerate state, their punishment in hell will be more tolerable, than if they had *not* performed them. Although sinners cannot, by their obedience to the law, procure for themselves a title to heaven; yea, and though they should never be driven by the law, from themselves to Christ, for righteousness and salvation, but should die under condemnation; yet, the more external obedience,

[z] 1 Tim. i. 9, 10. [a] Isa. i. 19.

they yield to the law, the lighter will their punishment be [b]. They cannot, by their obedience to the law, merit even the lowest place in heaven; but they can, by it, obtain for themselves, an exemption from the lowest place in hell.

5. Moreover, It is of special use to *convince* sinners of their *sinfulness and misery*, and also of their utter *inability*, by any righteousness and strength of their own, to recover themselves from their state of sin and misery. "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the works of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for, by the law is the knowledge of sin [c]." And again: "But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful [d]." The precepts of the law, serve to convince men of their sins of omission, and the prohibitions of it, to convince them of their sins of commission. There are various evils which, men would never have known to be sins, unless the holy law of God, had discovered the sinfulness of them. Accordingly our Apostle says, "I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet [e]." While the precepts of the law are of use, to convince sinners of the reality and sinfulness of their sins; the threatenings of it are employed, to discover to them the tremendous wrath and curse of

[b] Luke xii. 47, 48.
[c] Rom. iii. 19, 20.
[d] Rom. vii. 13.
[e] Rom. vii. 7.

God, due to them for their transgressions[f]. And by disclosing to them, the deep depravity of their nature, the precepts and threatenings of the law serve, in the hand of the Spirit, to convince them of their utter inability to recover themselves; and so, to humble them, under a painful sense of their sinfulness and misery[g].

6. Lastly, the law serves to *shew* them, their *extreme need of Christ*, and of his righteousness and salvation. "Wherefore then serveth the law?" says our Apostle, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made[h]." It awakens their consciences, to a conviction of their guilt, and to a dread of everlasting punishment; and so, discovers to them their absolute need of Christ, and of his perfect righteousness, for their justification in the sight of God[i].—Thus, the moral law is of use to men in general.

It is of special use to *unregenerate* sinners.

1. Under the awakening influences of the Holy Spirit, it serves as a covenant of works, to *convince them of sin;* and to shew them that, as they are sinners, and so, cannot perform *perfect* obedience to entitle them to life, it is *absolutely impossible* for them, ever to attain to justification and salvation, by their own performances. "By the deeds of the law," says the apostle Paul, "there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin[k]." "I was alive without the law

[f] Gal. iii. 10. [g] Rom. iii. 9. [h] Gal. iii. 19.
[i] Gal. iii. 24. Rom. x. 4. [k] Rom. iii. 20.

once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died [l]."

2. It *reveals the wrath* of God against them, for their innumerable transgressions of it, and so, impresses them with *fear of eternal punishment.* "The law worketh wrath [m]." It condemns every sinner who is under it, to death in all its direful extent; and so, it awakens his conscience to expect infinite and insupportable wrath, as the just recompense of disobedience to its righteous precepts. Hence the law, in this point of view, is called "the ministration of condemnation [n]." Thus, as a scourge, it troubles and torments the consciences of impenitent sinners, and renders them uneasy in a course of sin.

3. The law is of use likewise, to *urge* or *drive* them to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of lost sinners. Seeing it is the means of convincing sinners of their sinfulness, misery, and utter inability to recover themselves; it drives them from confidence in themselves, to the Lord Jesus, for "righteousness and strength:" and thus, it "is their schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ, that they may be justified by faith [o]." By demanding perfect holiness of nature, perfect obedience of life, and complete satisfaction for sin, which none of the children of Adam is able to afford; the law *shuts them up* to see their need of Christ, who has fully answered all these demands, for them who believe in him [p]. It serves as a looking-glass, in which, they may contemplate the exceeding sinfulness, and demerit of

[l] Rom. vii. 9. [m] Rom. iv. 15. [n] 2 Cor. iii. 9.
[o] Gal. iii 24. [p] Rom. x. 4.

their sins; in order that, despairing of life by their own works, they may be necessitated to flee speedily to Jesus Christ, who has fulfilled a perfect righteousness for their justification.

4. It serves, at the same time, to convince them, that they have those *characters of sinfulness and misery*, under which, the *offers and invitations* of the gospel are addressed to men. The offers and calls of the gospel are addresed to men,—as *unjust*, *ungodly*, as *sinners*, *enemies*, and persons *without strength*; as *lost*, *dead in trespasses and sins*, *simple ones*, *scorners*, *fools*, *stout-hearted and far from righteousness*; as *backsliders*, and *prisoners*, as *labouring and heavy laden*, *thirsting* for happiness of *any* kind, spending their money for that which is *not bread*, and their labour for that which *satisfieth not*, *disobedient*, *gainsaying*, *rebellious*, &c. Now the law, under the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit, is of use to shew sinners, that these are their very characters; and, therefore, that they are the very persons, to whom the Saviour is offered, and who are invited and commanded, to receive him with his righteousness and salvation. In this view, it is eminently subservient to the gospel.

5. Lastly, The law serves to render those of them *inexcusable*, who, turning a deaf ear to its dictates, respecting their sinfulness and misery, *refuse* to accept the offer of a Saviour, and of salvation by him [q]. And, it not only leaves all who reject the Divine Redeemer, without excuse, and under its dreadful curse; but it dooms them to greater, to redoubled condemnation. "He that believeth on

[q] Rom. i. 20. with Rom. ii. 15.

the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him[r]." "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord[s]."

THE law is of special use likewise, to *regenerate* persons or true believers, and that, both as a covenant of works, and as a rule of duty.

In its *covenant-form*, it serves to shew them, what Christ the second Adam, *did and suffered in their stead.* By requiring from all who are under it, perfect holiness of nature, and perfect obedience of life, with complete satisfaction for sin, as the conditions of eternal life; it teaches believers, what the Lord Jesus, in the greatness of his astonishing love, condescended to become, to do, and to suffer, for them. They may see in it as in a glass, that He did infinitely more for them, than any mere man or angel, could ever have done[t]. Thus the law, in subservience to the gospel, teaches believers *indirectly*, what the gospel teaches them in *direct* terms. It is of use also to shew them, under what infinite obligations they lie, to the Lord Jesus, for having

[r] John iii. 36. [s] Heb. x. 28—30.
[t] Rom. viii. 3, 4. Philip. ii. 8. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

fulfilled all the righteousness of it, in their stead. Though they are not under the law in its covenant-form, to be either justified or condemned by it; yet, it is of special use to them, to teach them, how much they are bound to love and serve Christ, who, by obeying the precepts, and enduring the penalties of it, in their stead, has brought in everlasting righteousness for their justification: and so, it is a mean of exciting their gratitude to Christ, and also to God, who so loved them, as to send Him to answer all its demands for them[u].

The law as a *rule of life*, is also of great use to believers. For although, as I already observed, they are not under it as a covenant of works, either to be justified by it for their obedience, or to be condemned by it for their disobedience; yet, they are under it as the rule of their new obedience, and they count it their exalted privilege and pleasure to be so[w]. Now, in this point of view, it serves, under the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit,

1. To shew them, *how far they are from perfection* of holiness. In order to render them more humble and contrite, to cause them to renounce, in a higher degree, all confidence in their own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, and to trust constantly, and only in the Lord Jesus, for all their salvation; the law discovers to them, the sin that dwells in them, and that cleaves to all their thoughts, words, and actions. It is of great use to teach them, the need that they have, to be more humble, penitent, and holy: and so it serves, in a high degree, to promote their sanctification, and

[u] 2 Cor. ix. 15. Col. i. 12—14. [w] 1 Cor. ix. 21.

their desire to attain perfection of holiness[x]. As it requires them to be holy in a perfect degree[y], it shews them, that their want of perfect conformity to it, is, *every moment*, their sin; and that they ought continually to press on toward perfection, and to long for heaven, where their holiness and happiness will be perfect[z].

2. It serves, under the witnessing of the Spirit, to *evidence* to their consciences, *the reality of their sanctification*. The holy law serves as a touch-stone, by which, believers may try, and so discover, their begun conformity to the image of the Son of God, the first-born among many brethren. Comparing their hearts and lives with that standard, they sometimes perceive that, though they are far from having a perfection of the degrees, yet they have a perfection of the *parts*, of sanctification; and so the law as a rule conduces, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to promote their comfort, as well as their holiness. "Our rejoicing is this," says an Apostle, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world[a]." As a covenant of works, the law is the instrument of the Spirit, as a spirit of bondage, for convincing and alarming secure sinners; but, as a rule of life in the hand of the blessed Mediator, it is a mean employed by the Spirit, as a Spirit of adoption, for comforting and encouraging true saints. Their habitual de-

[x] Philip. iii. 10—14. Rom. vii. 22—24.
[y] Matth. v. 48. [z] 2 Cor. v. 2—4. Philip. i. 23.
[a] 2 Cor. i. 12.

sire and endeavour, from faith and love, and for the glory of God, to keep *all* the commandments of it, are a good evidence to them, that they are the children of God, and are conformed to the image of his Son.

3. It is of great use to shew believers, *what duty they owe* to their God and Redeemer, and to *direct* them how to perform it. Christ, whom the Father hath given "for a leader and commander to the people," gives to believers that law, to be the rule of their obedience; to inform them, what grateful service, what holy obedience, they owe to Him and to God in him; and to direct them in the course of their obedience. Accordingly, the holy Psalmist says, "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path [b]." The law as a rule directs them, how to express their gratitude to the Lord Jesus, for fulfilling it for them, in its covenant-form [c]: it enjoins them, to shew their love and thankfulness to him, by a growing conformity of heart and life to it, as the rule of their obedience [d]. Whilst it shews them, what is good and what is evil, what they ought to do, and what they ought to forbear; it guides them in the exercise of their graces, and in the performance of their duties.—No sooner does the law as a *covenant*, urge men to Christ, for deliverance from the dominion of it in that form; than Christ leads them back to the law as a *rule*, for the regulation of their heart and conduct; in order that they may

[b] Psal. cxix. 104, 105. [c] Rom. viii. 3—5.
[d] John xiv. 15. 1 Tim. i. 5. Rom. xii. 1, 2.

express their gratitude to him, for his *perfect* obedience to it as a covenant, in their stead, by their *sincere* obedience to it as a rule [e].

4. Finally, It serves the highly important purpose of *binding* or *obliging* the saints, to all their various duties. The law as a rule of life to believers, comes invested with infinite authority, and, therefore, lays them under infinite obligations, even to *perfect* obedience. Seeing they do not cease to be creatures, by becoming new creatures; they are, and ever will be obliged to yield personal obedience to the moral law as a rule of life, and that, by the sovereign authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, their Creator: but this Divine authority, as was hinted above, issues to them, from the Lord Jesus the great Mediator, who has created, as well as redeemed them, and who has "all the fulness of the Godhead, dwelling in him bodily." They therefore receive the law at his mouth. And surely the law can lose nothing of its original authority, by being conveyed to them, in such a glorious channel as the hand of Christ: for, not only is he himself God over all; but all the sovereignty and authority of the infinitely glorious Godhead, are in Him as Mediator [f]. The Lord Jesus, therefore, instead of dissolving, or in the smallest degree weakening, does greatly strengthen, the original obligation of the moral law [g]. Indeed, it is only, to God as in Christ, only, according to the law as in the hand of Christ, and only, by a real believer in Christ, that the smallest *acceptable obedience* can

[e] John xiv. 15.

[f] Exod. xxiii. 21.

[g] Confess. Chap. xix. art. 5.

be performed. The law as a rule in the hand of Christ, then, is of special utility to believers; inasmuch as it shews them, how high their obligations are, to the love and practice of holiness. And thus, it eminently subserves the gospel, that "doctrine which is according to godliness."

From the foregoing detail, it will be obvious to the devout reader, That the law as a covenant, is *of standing use*, in the effectual vocation of sinners to Christ. The Holy Spirit make the offers and calls of the gospel, effectual to no sinners, without setting home the law as a covenant of works, to their minds and consciences. Sinners may be drawn to the Saviour, by a discovery of his redeeming love[h], and so, may be effectually called without *legal terrors;* but no man is persuaded and enabled to come to him, without *a true conviction* of sin, and of the want of righteousness. But, it is by the law in its covenant-form, that sinners are convinced of sin, and of their need of a perfect righteousness, to free them from eternal death, and to entitle them to eternal life. Thus, the law is of standing use to them, to shew them their extreme need of the compassionate Saviour, and of his perfect righteousness; and so, to "break up the fallow ground" of their hearts. In this way, the fiery law continues, by the almighty agency of the Spirit, to subserve the merciful design of the blessed gospel.

Hence we may also learn, *how much conviction* of sin and of righteousness, by the law, *is requisite to true conversion.* Such a measure of it in adult

[h] Hos. xi. 4.

persons, is necessary, as will suffice to make them sensible, That they are sinners in heart and in life;—that they are already undone, and that their misery under the curse of the law, is inexpressible;—that they have no righteousness, to answer the just demands of the broken law;—and that they are so dead in sin, as to be totally unable to save themselves, or so much as to *prepare* themselves for salvation. Such a measure as this, is requisite; because without it, they would not see their absolute need of the Lord Jesus, to save them, either from their sin, or their misery; nor would they desire above all things, a personal interest in Him, and in his great salvation. Not that it is requisite, as a federal condition of their being graciously received by Christ; but,—only as an *excitement*, to urge them to flee speedily for refuge to him.

From what has been said, we may also infer, that a minister of the gospel, may often preach the *law* to his hearers, and yet, *not deserve* to be called a *legal preacher*. He cannot preach the gospel faithfully and successfully, unless he preach the law in subservience to it. If he be a faithful, and an able minister of the new Testament, he will preach the law as a covenant of works, and will press it upon the consciences of secure sinners, and self-righteous formalists. He will denounce the tremendous curse of it, on those who continue under it, and who rely securely on their own works, for a title to eternal life; in order to tear away every pillow of carnal security, on which they repose themselves, and to shew them the vanity of every lying refuge. In proportion also as he is faithful,

he will preach the law as a rule of life, to them who believe: he will press upon them, the spiritual performance of every duty, and an holy abhorrence of every sin. He will exhort them, to perform all their duties, from evangelical principles, in a holy manner, and to holy ends. Now if he preach the law in *that* manner, no man will be disposed to fix the odious character of a legal preacher upon him, but one who, either is grossly ignorant, or is an enemy both of the law and of the gospel.

Does the law in its covenant-form require of every one who is under it, that he keep its commandments *perfectly*, as the condition of eternal life? Then, it is vain for him to say, 'I endeavour, or I do all that I can, to keep them.'—It is not *endeavours* to obey, but perfect and perpetual obedience, that will satisfy the precepts of the righteous law. It is not said [i], 'Cursed is every one who does not endeavour to continue in all things;' but,—"Cursed is every one that *continueth not*, in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." It is the man "who *doeth* these things," not the man who endeavours to do them, "that shall live by them [k]." Many flatter themselves, that their state is good, and their salvation sure; because they do not live securely in a course of sin, but on the contrary, endeavour to keep the commandments as well as they can; and, because God is so merciful, that he will surely pardon the sins which, the infirmity of their nature renders unavoidable. This is a common, but a very dangerous, yea, a fundamental

[i] Gal. iii. 10. [k] Rom. x. 5.

error; for it proceeds on the supposition that, the righteous law can accept of defective, or imperfect obedience, and that, Divine justice can dispense with the punishment of sin. No man, under the law as a covenant, can be accepted, for endeavouring to keep the precepts of it, as well as he can. The law does not say, 'Labour to obey; but, Do it, and Do it perfectly and perpetually: Do it without the smallest failure.' The least deficiency in obedience, will subject a man to the curse. The self-righteous sinner, then, would do well to consider that, he is under a law, which demands absolute *perfection* of obedience, on pain of death in all its dreadful extent; and that, if he has transgressed but in a single instance, he is thereby exposed to the eternal execution of its righteous, and tremendous penalty. "Tell me," says our Apostle, "ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law[1]?" 'Do ye not hear, that it requires perfect obedience of you, on pain of the curse? And if it demands perfect obedience, and, at the same time, complete satisfaction for sins that are past; what will you do, who cannot give to it, either the one or the other? What will you do, in the prospect of death and of judgment, who have no communion with the second Adam in his righteousness? Alas! your own righteousness is far, very far, from being commensurate with the perfect rule of that holy and righteous law, by which, all your thoughts, words, and actions, are then to be tried.'

Again, Does the law as a covenant of works, demand from every one who is under it, infinite *satis-*

[1] Gal. iv. 21.

faction for sin, as well as perfect obedience? or does it demand from every unregenerate sinner, *perfection of suffering*, as well as of doing? Then, though a descendant of fallen Adam could say, That he never had, in his *own* person, transgressed the law, and that he would, to the end of his life, "continue in all things which are written in it, to do them;" yet, even this perfect obedience of his, would not suffice to fulfil the law, and so, to entitle him to eternal life, according to the covenant of works: for the law as a covenant, would still demand from him, *full satisfaction* for the sin, that he committed in the first Adam: and satisfaction for sin, cannot be given by obeying the precept, but by *suffering the penalty*, of the law in that form. Ever since the fall, the law and the justice of God demand, not only full payment of the original debt of perfect obedience; but complete payment likewise, of the debt of infinite satisfaction, for the offence given by sin, to the infinite Majesty of heaven [m]. Nay, in the order of law and justice, the debt of full satisfaction, ought to be discharged, previous to that of perfect obedience. The infinitely righteous Jehovah, will first be *pacified*, by a complete satisfaction to his justice, for the infinite insult offered to his glorious Majesty, by transgression; before he can, consistently with the honour of his character and government, be *pleased* with *any* degree of obedience from the sinner. If a sinner then, hope for eternal life on the ground of his own righteousness, he must first, give infinite satisfaction for all his innumerable crimes, and

[m] Gen. ii. 17.

then, begin and complete a course of perfect obedience, as the condition of life. He must first of all, make complete satisfaction to the penalty of the righteous law, before his obedience to the precept, can be acceptable to God. But is this possible?—Is it possible for one, who is to continue through all eternity, to be a *sinner*, as well as a sufferer?—Is it possible for a sinner, first, to endure the whole of *infinite* punishment, or of *eternal* wrath; and after *endless* torments shall have been completely endured, to return,—and, under the dominion of sin, to perform *perfect* obedience as the condition of eternal life? O that self-righteous and secure sinners, would consider, before it be too late, How impossible it will be for them, ever to obtain eternal life, by their own righteousness! and, that they would, by faith, submit themselves to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by which, he hath magnified the law and made it honourable!

Moreover, it appears from what has been said, that, when our Apostle asserts, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, That "no man can be justified before God, by the works of the law," by the law, he does not mean, the law merely as promulgated from *Sinai*, or the law of Moses *as such:* for those churches consisted chiefly of Gentile converts, who had no concern with the law of Moses, *merely as such.* Before their conversion, they were heathens, and were under the law, not as delivered from Sinai, but as the law of nature, and as a covenant of works, made with Adam and with them in him. As, therefore, no Jews can be justified, by the works of the moral law as a covenant, displayed on mount Sinai; so, no Gentiles

can be justified, by the works of the moral law as a covenant, made with Adam. They among the Gentiles, who have been redeemed, are said to have been redeemed from the *curse* of the law[n]; that is, of the moral law in its covenant-form, as given to Adam.

Once more, Is it by the law as a covenant, that sinners are convinced of *misery*, as well as of sin? Then, *how great* is the misery, and *how intolerable* will the punishment be, especially of those under the gospel, who obstinately continue in their unbelief and impenitence! While the violated law continues in all its binding force against them, their condemnation will be inconceivably more dreadful, than if they had never heard the gracious offers of the gospel. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil[o]." "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder[p]." Impenitent sinners, under the gospel, shall be punished, not only for their innumerable transgressions of the law, but for hating, and stifling, their convictions of sin and misery, by it; and their punishment, for contemning and rejecting the great Redeemer, offered to them in the gospel, will be far more tremendous, and intolerable, than if they had never heard of his name. The punishment of no sinners will be so dreadful, as that of them who hear of an only Saviour, and yet refuse to believe in him.

[n] Gal. iii. 13. [o] John iii. 19. [p] Luke xx. 18.

Suppose that he is offered, and that sinners reject the gracious offer, a thousand times; they are, a thousand times, greater sinners, than they were, when he began to be offered to them; and according to the greatness of their sin, will their punishment be. Oh! that the secure sinner under the gospel, would now begin to consider the heinousness of his sin, and the horrible depth of the misery which awaits him in the place of torment! You are under the law as a broken covenant, and obnoxious to its dreadful curse. You believe not on the Son of God for his salvation, and, therefore, the wrath of God abideth on you. Can you imagine, that the omniscient, and righteous, Judge of all the earth, will take no notice of you? or, that He who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity" but with infinite abhorrence, will suffer you to sin against Him, with impunity? Oh, how inexpressibly dreadful will your condition be, if you remain asleep in your sinfulness and misery, till everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, awaken you! Alarmed by the terrors of the fiery law, let your heart be won to the compassionate Saviour, by the mild accents of the blessed gospel. In the glorious gospel, Jesus, with his meritorious righteousness, and his great salvation, is freely, and wholly, and particularly, offered to you as a lost sinner of mankind; and the unlimited and authentic offer, affords you a right, to receive and trust in him for complete salvation. O do not any longer despise, this unspeakable, this inestimably precious gift. Come to the Lord Jesus, and He

will in no wise cast you out. Believe in the dear Redeemer, and you shall never perish, but have eternal life.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

By the law here, is meant, the moral law as a *covenant of works*, and by the gospel, the gospel in its *strict and proper sense*. To know the difference, so as to be able to distinguish aright, between the law and the gospel, is of the utmost importance to the faith, holiness, and comfort, of every true Christian. It will be impossible otherwise, for a man so to believe, as to "be filled with joy and piece in believing. If he know not the difference between the law and the gospel, he will be apt, especially in the affair of justification, to confound the one with the other. The consequence will be, that, in his painful experience, bondage will be mixed with liberty of spirit, fear with hope, sorrow with joy, and death with life. If he cannot so distinguish the gospel from the law, as to expect all his salvation from the grace of the gospel, and nothing of it from the works of the law; he will easily be induced, to connect his own works with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, in the affair of his justification. This was the great error of the Judaizing teachers, in the churches of Galatia. They mingled the law with the gospel, in the

business of justification; and thereby they so corrupted the gospel, as to alter the very nature of it, and to make it *another* gospel. They taught, That, except men were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be justified nor saved[q]. They informed the people, That, while the righteousness of Christ received by faith, was necessary, their own works of obedience were also requisite, in *connection* with it, to entitle them to justification before God. This is a fundamental error, and such an one, that if even an angel from heaven, would publish it, he should be accursed. Accordingly, the Apostle boldly affirmed to the Galatians, and he deliberately and earnestly repeated his declaration, That "though he himself, or even an angel from heaven, were to preach any other gospel to them, than that which he had preached unto them, he should be accursed[r]." To mingle, then, the law with the gospel, or to teach men to join the works of the law, to the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, as the ground of a sinner's title to justification in the sight of God, is, according to our Apostle, to preach "*another gospel.*"

As this is a great, so it is a very *dangerous* error. If a man attempt to add any works of his own, to the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ, as the ground of his justification before God, Christ profits him nothing. The obedience and death of Christ, are "become of no effect to him." "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that

[q] Acts xv. 1, 5. [r] Gal. i. 8, 9.

he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace[s]." If a man try to connect his own performances, with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of his sins, and the acceptance of his person as righteous in the sight of God, he deprives himself of all benefit from that perfect righteousness. If he rely on his own works of obedience, for even the smallest part of his title to eternal life, "he is a debtor to do the whole law" in its covenant-form, and he fixes himself under the dreadful curse of it. Christ will profit him nothing, unless he rely on His infinitely glorious righteousness *only*, for all his title to justification and eternal life. A sinner depends on the righteousness of Christ, for justification, to no good purpose, if he do not rely on it *only*, and, neither in whole, nor in part, on his own obedience.

If an exercised and *disquieted* Christian, do not distinctly know the difference between the law and the gospel, he cannot attain to solid tranquillity, or established comfort of soul. He will always be in danger of building his hope and comfort, partly, if not wholly, upon his own graces and performances, instead of grounding them wholly, on the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ; and so, he shall be perpetually disquieted by anxious and desponding fear. For, since the law knows nothing of pardon of sin, the transgressions which he is daily committing, will be greater grounds of fear to him, than his graces and performances can be, of hope. The

[s] Gal. v. 2—4.

spirit of a depressed Christian, cannot be raised to solid consolation; but by being able, so to distinguish between the law and the gospel, as to rely only, and with settled confidence, on the spotless righteousness of the second Adam, presented to him in the gospel, for all his title "to the justification of life."

Ignorance of the difference between the law and the gospel, *promotes* also, in a great degree, the strength and influence of a *self-righteous temper*. When a man is driven to acts of obedience, by the dread of God's wrath revealed in the law, and not drawn to them, by the belief of his love revealed in the gospel; when he fears God because of his power and justice, and not because of his goodness; when he regards God more as an avenging Judge, than as a compassionate Friend and Father; and when he contemplates God, rather as terrible in majesty, than as infinite in grace and mercy; he shews that he is under the dominion, or at least under the prevalence, of a legal spirit. If he build his faith of the pardon of sin, of the favour of God, and of eternal life, upon any graces which he supposes are implanted in him, or upon any duties which are performed by him; he is evidently under the power of a self-righteous temper. He shews, that he is under the influence of this hateful temper, by grounding his hope and his comfort, upon conditions performed by himself, and not, upon the gracious and absolute promises of the gospel. In a word, when his hope of Divine mercy is raised, by the liveliness of his frame in duties, and not by discoveries of the freeness and riches of redeeming grace, offered to him in the gospel;

or, when he expects eternal life, not as the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ, but as a recompense from God, for his own obedience and suffering; he plainly shews, that he is under the power of a legal spirit. Now, if he be ignorant of the leading distinctions between the law and the gospel, this ignorance will strengthen his legal propensity, and confirm him in his resolution, to seek justification partly, if not wholly, by the works of the law.

If *awakened sinners*, be ignorant of the leading points of difference between the law and the gospel, this will *discourage* them much, from attempting to come to Christ for salvation. If they cannot distinguish aright, between the law and the gospel, they will mingle the works of the one, with the grace of the other; and the consequence will be, that they will form confused, false, and discouraging, notions of the compassionate Saviour; and so, instead of being drawn to him, they will be deterred from trusting in him for salvation. They will allow themselves to apprehend, that they must have something to bring with them, to the Saviour, in order to recommend them to him; some good qualifications, to entitle them to his favour. Although it is declared in the gospel, That *all things* are already given to Christ, by the Father; yet, when the thoughts of convinced sinners, about the law and the gospel, are indistinct, they imagine that, they must still have *something* of their own, to bring and present to him. They conceive that, they must, in some measure, have that which is commanded in the law, before they can have a right, to receive that which is offered in the gospel; or that, they must have those holy disposi-

tions to bring to Christ, which He only can bestow, and for which, they ought as sinners to come to him. Thus, having the righteousness required of them in the law, and not the infinitely perfect righteousness freely offered to them in the gospel, before their eyes, their consciences are brought into trouble and perplexity; and, instead of coming as sinners to Christ, for righteousness and strength, they are ready to harden themselves in despair of his mercy, and in aversion from him.

As a man's ignorance, of the difference between the law and the gospel, is inexpressibly hurtful to him; so his being able to distinguish aright between them, must be of *unspeakable advantage* to him. It is an attainment in which, the present and future welfare of his soul, is deeply concerned. If a good man understand well, the leading points of distinction between them; it will, under the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit, enable him to understand the Scriptures clearly, and to reconcile all such passages, as seem to contradict one another. It will also help him to determine rightly, in difficult cases of conscience, and so to try all doctrines by the touchstone of the word, as, easily to distinguish truth from error. And, if he be at any time in distress of mind, it will, in the hand of the Holy Comforter, be a special mean of recovering for him, that peace of conscience and joy of faith, which will enable him to serve the Lord with gladness[t]. In few words, It will enable him, to shew such regard to the gospel, as to receive, by the daily exercise of faith, the person, righteousness, and fulness of

[t] Psal. c. 2.

Christ, therein offered to him; and such respect to the law in its covenant-form, as to present in the hand of faith to it, the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ, as the only ground of his right to justification and eternal life. It will also qualify him for honouring the law as a rule of duty, by advancing in the love and practice of that universal holiness, which it requires.

As it is, then, of unspeakable importance both to sinners and to saints, to distinguish aright between the law and the gospel, especially in the affair of justification; I shall, in dependance on the Spirit of truth, endeavour to point out the *difference* between them.

The law, especially in its covenant-form, and the gospel, in its strict and proper sense, may be distinguished from each other, in the following respects:

1. The law, in all that is essential to it, proceeds necessarily from the very *nature* of God; but the gospel, in all its doctrines, offers, and promises, flows from his *love, grace, and mercy*, or from his *good will* to men. The manifestation of God's love, grace, and mercy, in redeeming sinners to himself, was no more necessary, than the display of his wisdom, power, and goodness, in creating them [u].

2. The law is known, partly by the *light of nature* [w]; but the gospel is known, only by a *revelation from heaven* [x]. Man, though he is a fallen creature, has in some degree, a natural knowledge of the law; but he has no natural knowledge of the

[u] Lev. xix. 2. Eph. i. 4—7. and ii. 4—8.
[w] Rom. ii. 14, 15. [x] Matth. xi. 27.

gospel. The gospel was wrapped up in profound secrecy, till it was revealed from heaven by the Son of God, immediately after the fall; and therefore, it is called "a mystery," and "the mystery of Christ[y]." Hence, unregenerate sinners are commonly not so averse, from hearing the doctrine of the law, as they are, from hearing that of the gospel. Legal doctrine, they can naturally understand, for it has a testimony in their consciences; but evangelical doctrine is, a strange, unaccountable, and incredible doctrine to them[z].

3. The law regards us as *creatures*, originally formed with *sufficient ability* to yield perfect obedience to it; and accordingly it requires us to retain, and to exert that ability, in performing perfectly all the duties, which we owe to God, ourselves, and our neighbours: whereas, the gospel considers us as *sinners*, condemned to death in all its extent, and totally destitute of strength, to perform the smallest degree even of sincere obedience; and it declares to us, what God, as a God of infinite grace and mercy, has done, and what he offers and promises still to be, and to do, for us[a]. It declares that, in the Lord Jesus, believing sinners "have righteousness and strength," and that in Him, they are justified, and have life eternal. Accordingly the doctrines, offers, and promises of it, continue to be dispensed to them, so long as sin remains in them, but no longer.

4. The law shews us, "what manner of persons we *ought to be*, in all holy conversation and godliness;" but it does not informs us, by what *means*

[y] Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. iii. 4. [z] 1 Cor. i. 23.
[a] Isa. xlii. 6, 7. Matth. xviii. 11. Rom. v. 6—10.

we may become such [b]: whereas the gospel teaches us, *how* we may be made such; namely, by union, and communion with Christ in his righteousness and fulness, or, by the imputation of his righteousness to us, and the sanctification of his Spirit in us [c].

5. The law in its *commanding power*, differs much from the gospel. The law says, "Do and ye shall live;" 'ye shall, by performing personal and perfect obedience, entitle yourselves to eternal life [d]:' whereas the gospel says, 'Live, for all is already done; all the righteousness, meritorious of eternal life for believers, is already fulfilled, by the second Adam their adorable Surety: first, Live in union and communion with Him, and then, Do, not for, but *from* life already received.' The law proceeds upon the supposition, that we have still all that we originally had, and requires perfect obedience; the gospel supposes that we have nothing, and furnishes us with all that the law demands. The former, requires perfection from us, but offers us no supply of strength to attain to it; whereas the latter, teaches us that we have it in Christ, and offers it to us, as an inestimable gift of grace [e]. When, therefore, the law as a covenant of works, comes to us with its requirements, of perfect obedience as the condition of life, and of complete satisfaction for sin, we ought to refer it to our Divine Surety, for an answer to *both* its demands. The law requires obedience, on pain of death: the gospel attracts and encourages to obe-

[b] Luke x. 27, 28. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. ii. 16.
[c] Acts xvi. 31. 1 Cor. i. 30.
[d] Matth. xix. 17.
[e] Rom. v. 17.

dience, by the promise of life, as "the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The former, exhibits the charge of paying what we owe, for a title to life: the latter, the discharge, in consequence of its having been already paid, by the Surety in our stead. The law, commands faith and repentance: the gospel strictly taken, does not command them, but it *teaches* them: it teaches every duty, but commands none. The former, accepts no obedience but that which is perfect and perpetual: the grace of the latter, accepts though not as a justifying righteousness, sincere obedience from persons already justified, though it is far from being perfect. In a word, the law says, "*Do* this, and thou shalt live;" but the gospel in the dispensation of it, says, "*Believe* this, and thou shalt be saved." The law is God in a command; but the gospel is God in Christ, God in a promise. The law gives men more to do for eternal life, than they are able to do: the gospel gives them less to do, than they are willing to do. The law gives man all the work: the gospel gives grace all the work, and all the glory.

6. The law, as it has *a promise of life*, is very unlike to the gospel. The former, promises eternal life to a man, on condition of his own perfect obedience, and of the obedience of no other; whereas the latter, promises it on condition of the perfect obedience of Christ, received by faith, and of that of no other. The promise of the law as a covenant, is, the promise of God as an absolute God; but the promise of the gospel is, the promise of God as a God of grace in Christ. The promise of the former, was to have been performed after obedience; whereas the promise of the latter, begins to be performed to the true believer, before, and in order to

his obedience. In the law of works, the promise of privilege, is grounded on the performance of duty; but in the gospel, the performance of duty is founded on the promise, and even on the begun enjoyment, of privilege. The promise of the law, is strictly conditional; but the leading promises of the gospel, are to us, entirely absolute.

7. In its *condemning power*, the law is very different from the gospel. The law condemns, and cannot justify, a sinner: the gospel justifies, and cannot condemn, the sinner who believes in Jesus. In the law, God appears in terrible threatenings of eternal death: in the gospel, he manifests himself in gracious promises of life eternal. In the former, he curses, as on mount Ebal: in the latter, he blesses, as on mount Gerizzim. In the one, he speaks in thunder, and with terrible majesty: in the other, with soft whispers, or a still small voice[f]. By the trumpet of the law, he proclaims war with sinners: by the Jubilee-trumpet of the gospel, he publishes peace, "peace on earth and good will toward men[g]." The law, is a sound of terror to convinced sinners: the gospel, is a joyful sound, "good tidings of great joy." The former, represents God, as a God of wrath and vengeance: the latter, as a God of love, grace, and mercy. The one, presents him to sinners as "a consuming fire:" the other, exhibits the precious blood of the Lamb, which quenches the fire of his righteous indignation, that it may not consume such sinners as believe. That, presents to the view of the sinner, "a throne of judgment:" this, "a throne of grace." Every sentence of con-

[f] 1 Kings xix. 12. [g] Luke ii. 14.

demnation, in Scripture, belongs to the law: every sentence of justification, forms a part of the gospel. The law condemns a sinner for his first offence; but the gospel, offers him the forgiveness of all his offences.

8. The law, as it *convinces* sinners of sin and misery, is to be distinguished from the gospel. While the law, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, serves to convince the sinner of his sin, and of his want of righteousness; the gospel presents him with a perfect righteousness, for his justification before God. The law, wounds and terrifies the guilty sinner: the gospel heals and comforts the guilty sinner who believes in Jesus. The one shews him, that his debt is infinitely great, and that he has nothing to clear it: the other informs him, that, by the obedience and death of Jesus, his Divine Surety, it is paid to the utmost farthing. The spirit of the law, is a "spirit of bondage to fear;" but the spirit of the gospel, is an ingenuous, a free Spirit. The law is a house of bondage; "it gendereth to bondage;" whereas the gospel, "proclaims the opening of the prison, to them who are bound." "By the law, is the knowledge of sin:" by the gospel, is the knowledge of a Saviour, and of remission of sin, as well as of salvation from the love, power, and practice of sin. The law says to every man, Thou art a sinner: the gospel says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." The law shews the sinner his disease: the gospel presents him with healing balm, "the balm in Gilead, and the Physician there." The former presents grounds of fear: the latter, a foundation of hope. That reveals God

as displeased: this shews that, his wrath has been endured and appeased. In the law, Christ is concealed: in the gospel, he, with his righteousness and salvation, is revealed and presented to sinners. The law is, a killing letter, "a ministration of death:" the gospel is, "the ministration of the Sprit," as a Spirit of life[h]. The former is "the law of sin and death," the law which connects sin and death together: the latter is, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus[i]," the "doctrine which is according to godliness." The one is, "the ministration of condemnation:" the other is, "the ministration of righteousness[k]."

9 When the law is viewed in its *irritating power*, it differs much from the gospel. The law as a covenant, by forbidding all manner of sin, and that under the most dreadful penalty, irritates the reigning depravity of the sinner; and so, it is the innocent occasion of his hardening his heart the more, in committing sin[l]; whereas, the gospel and the grace revealed in it, renew and melt the obdurate heart. The law, by affording sin in the depraved heart, an occasion of exerting itself the more, "is the strength of sin[m]:" the grace of the gospel, on the contrary, subdues the iniquity, slays the enmity, and, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, sanctifies the heart of the believing sinner. When the love of God revealed in the gospel, is known and believed with application, it melts down the obdurate heart, into penitential sorrow for sin; whereas, the terrors of the law, increase the power

[h] 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8. [i] Rom. viii. 2. [k] 2 Cor. iii. 9.
[l] Rom. iv. 15. [m] 1 Cor. xv. 56.

of indwelling sin, and harden the heart against godly sorrow.

10. Lastly, the law as it *admits of boasting*, is very different from the gospel. "Where is boasting then?" says the apostle Paul, "It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith[n]." By the law of faith here, is meant, the *doctrine* of faith; the doctrine of a sinner's justification, only on the ground of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith alone. This doctrine of faith, leaves the sinner no room to boast, as if he had, by his own good qualities or works, entitled himself, either in whole or in part, to justification before God. But, the law or covenant of works, does not exclude, but when obedience is performed, admits of boasting in the creature. The gospel or doctrine of faith, on the other hand, admits of no boasting of one's own obedience. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord[o]." "My soul," says the Psalmist, "shall make her boast in the Lord[p]." The apostle Paul says to the saints at Ephesus, "By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of *works*, lest any man should boast[q]." The man, who is under the dominion of the law of works, and of a legal spirit, boasts of his own works; and he hopes that they will, in a greater or less degree, procure justification and eternal life for him; whereas he, who is under the sanctifying influence of the grace of the gospel, boasts only of the righteousness of his incarnate

[n] Rom. iii. 27.
[o] 1 Cor. i. 31.
[p] Psal. xxxiv. 2.
[q] Eph. ii. 8, 9.

Redeemer[r]. According to the law of works, justification can only be, by works of perfect and personal obedience, which admit of boasting; whereas, according to the gospel, justification can only be, by faith, the only instrument of receiving Christ and his righteousness, which excludes boasting.

It may be proper here to remark that, although the law and the gospel, comprehend the whole doctrine of Scripture; yet, they are not to be distinguished, by the books of Scripture, or by the Old Testament and the New. All that is contained in the books of the Old Testament, is not to be considered as the doctrine of the law; neither is all that is found in the books of the New Testament, to be viewed as the doctrine of the gospel. The law and the gospel are declared in each of them. In the Old Testament, we find much of the gospel, and in the New, much of the law. In many places, Moses and the Prophets publish the gospel; so that Jerome questioned, whether he should style Isaiah, a prophet, or an evangelist. In many passages again, Christ and his Apostles promulgate the law. For instance, Christ says, "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven[s]." "He that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God[t]." "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him[u]." His Apostles also say, "The law is not of faith; but, The man who doeth them, shall live in them[w]."

[r] Isa. xlv. 25. Gal. vi. 14.
[s] Matth. vii. 21.
[t] Luke xii. 9.
[u] John iii. 36.
[w] Gal. iii. 12.

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all[x]." "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men[y]." These, and many other passages in the New Testament, similar to them, contain the doctrine of the law. When a man is commanded, either in the Old Testament or in the New, to perform any work, in order to secure him from temporal, or eternal punishment, or to entitle him to a temporal, or eternal reward; it is to be accounted the doctrine of the law. On the other hand, where the blessings of salvation are declared, offered, and promised freely, without any work to be performed by sinners, as the *proper condition* of them; all such passages, whether in the Old Testament, or in the New, contain the doctrine of the gospel.

While we thus distinguish aright, between the law as a covenant, and the gospel strictly taken, we should always take heed, That we do not apply to ourselves, the gospel, where the law should be applied; nor the law, where the gospel ought to be applied. If we be impenitent and secure, and need to be convinced of our guiltiness and misery; we ought, for this purpose, to apply the law immediately to our consciences, and not the gospel. If, on the contrary, we be truly convinced of our sinfulness and misery, and be deeply sensible, that we have no righteousness nor strength of our own; we should, for our relief and comfort, apply the offers and promises of the gospel to our consciences, and not the curses of the law. In the former case,

[x] James ii. 10. [y] Rom. i. 18.

we ought to apply the law as a covenant to our consciences, in order to apply the gospel: in the latter, we should apply the gospel, in order to be enabled to keep the law as a rule. When any question or doubt arises, respecting our justification before God, the law, and works of the law, must be excluded, and stand at a distance; in order that grace, reigning through the righteousness of Jesus Christ to eternal life, may appear sovereign and free; and that the offer and promise of the gospel, as well as the faith of the believer, may, in that momentous affair, stand alone. For, although the believing sinner is not justified by a faith which *is alone;* yet, he is justified by the instrumentality of faith *alone*, and that "without the works of the law[z]." Faith justifies, not as it is an act or work; for as such, it is a work of the law, an act or work commanded in the law; but it justifies, as it is the *instrument* or *mean* of justification. In this instrumentality, no other grace of the Spirit, and no work of the law, are to be associated with it. Nor is it for its own intrinsic worth, that a man is justified by the instrumentality of it; for he is nowhere said in Scripture, to be justified *for* faith, but only, to be justified *by* it.

From the preceding particulars, the following reflections will be obvious to the devout and intelligent reader:

Although the covenant of works revealed in the law, and the covenant of grace exhibited in the gospel, are different from one another; yet they

[z] Rom. iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16.

are *not contrary* to each other. The one is not, strictly speaking, contrary to the other, but is only dissimilar to it, or different from it. Whatever is required in the covenant of works, as the condition of eternal life, is, according to the covenant of grace, provided, and given gratuitously to believing sinners. They who believe, "receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, and so, reign in life by one, Jesus Christ[a]." "If, by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," according to the first covenant; "by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous," according to the second[b]. In the former, eternal life is promised to a man, on condition of a perfect righteousness to be fulfilled by himself: in the latter, it is promised to a believer, on condition of the infinitely perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith, and imputed by God[c].

In the affair of justification, the law as a covenant of works, is not only to be distinguished, but to be *separated*, from the gospel. When a true believer is, at any time, in doubt of his justification and title to eternal life, he ought to set the law as a covenant and the works of that law, entirely aside; and to rely anew, for all his title to life eternal, on the spotless righteousness of the second Adam, offered to him in the gospel. He ought in that case, to contemplate only, the free and superabounding grace of the gospel, and to embrace, by the renewed exercise of an appropriating faith, the gracious offers and promises of it. He should exclude from his view, the law and all legal righ-

[a] Rom. v. 17. [b] Rom. v. 19. [c] Rom. viii. 3.

teousness, and, relying only on the righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel, he should trust that, this glorious, this consummate, righteousness alone, gives him a *complete* title to justification and eternal life. As it is not by the law, nor the works of the law, but by means of faith only, applying the righteousness brought near in the gospel, that a man is justified before God; so, in the business of his justification, he must set aside all works of the law, and depend wholly, on the righteousness and grace of the great Redeemer. Whilst, in the business of sanctification, the law as a rule, is to be connected with the gospel; in that of justification, the law as a covenant, is always to be separated from it.

None can successfully minister *true consolation* to a discouraged and disconsolate believer, without teaching him to distinguish, in his own case, between the law and the gospel. If the exercised Christian, cannot distinguish aright between them, the consequence will be, that he will often hang in anxious suspense, between hope and fear. The legal temper that remains in him, availing itself of his indistinct views, will frequently prompt him to ground his hope and comfort, not on the righteousness of Christ, and the promises of God, only; but partly on these, and partly on his own endeavours to keep the law. Hence it cannot but follow, that the sins of his nature and life, will often afford him greater cause to fear, than his attainments and duties will, to hope. Every fresh discovery of the evils of his heart, and of the sin which cleaves to that obedience on which, his hope and comfort, in a great measure, are founded, will disquiet and

perplex his soul. Thus, he will remain a stranger to settled comfort, and to habitual cheerfulness of spirit, in the performance of his duty. But if he be taught to distinguish aright, between the law and the gospel, he will, on almost every occasion, flee from the law of works, to the righteousness of Christ granted to him in the gospel, and make this the sole ground of all his hope: he will rely, with settled and strong confidence, on the Lord Jesus, for righteousness to justify, and for grace to sanctify him.

Hence we may also be enabled to discern, when we are *self-righteous and servile*, in the performance of our duties. We evidently are so, when, instead of being constrained to obedience, by the astonishing love of Christ, manifested in the gospel, we are either driven to it, by the slavish fear of hell, or dragged to it, by the mercenary hope of heaven; when we obey God, not with filial affection, and fear of dishonouring him, but with slavish dread of his vindictive justice and wrath; and when we labour to obey, in order that our obedience may afford us a right, either to salvation itself, or to the Saviour, either to the favour of God, or to the promises of the gospel. Our manner of performing our duties is legal, when we ground our *comfort*, on any thing wrought in us, or done by us; and when our hope of salvation rises, by the liveliness of our frame in performing duties, and not by the righteousness of Christ in the offers, nor by the grace and faithfulness of God in the promises, of the gospel.

What has been advanced, may serve likewise to shew us, the exceeding sinfulness, *the horrible ma-*

lignity, of a self-righteous temper. It strives to thwart the infinitely great and gracious *design* of God, in giving his only begotten Son for us. The grand design of God, in the inestimable gift of his dear Son to obey and suffer for us, is, to display in our redemption, the transcendent glory of all his perfections, and especially, of the exceeding riches of his grace [d]. Hence the glorious gospel is styled, "the word of his *grace* [e]." Now the legalist presumes, to cross or counteract that glorious design of God, as a God of grace. He would have the glory of self, displayed, and not the glory of God, in the person and work of Jesus Christ; the honour of his own righteousness manifested, instead of the glory of the Divine Redeemer's righteousness; and the lustre of his own good qualities discovered, in opposition to the glory of redeeming grace. The gracious intention of the Son of God, in assuming the human nature, was, That he might fulfil all righteousness for the elect of God; in order that grace, free, sovereign, distinguishing grace, might reign through his righteousness, unto eternal life for them [f]. On the contrary, the intention of the legalist is, to establish his own righteousness, in the affair of justification, and so, to frustrate the design of Christ; for, "if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain [g]." Thus, the self-righteous formalist, resolutely sets himself in hostile opposition to the glory of redeeming grace; and so, he attempts to rob the Most High of his transcendent glory, as a

[d] Eph. ii. 4—9.
[e] Acts xx. 32.
[f] Rom. v. 21.
[g] Gal. ii. 21.

God of grace.—No man exercises evangelical repentance, even in the smallest degree, but he, who repents of this diabolical enmity and opposition of his heart, to "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:" and none has ever begun, to mortify the members of the body of sin in his heart, except he, who is mortifying this self-righteous temper. Unbelief and a legal spirit, are the very soul or life of the body of sin[gg]. Unless the mortification of sin, therefore, begin in them, it cannot penetrate the whole body of sin.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

As the law in its covenant-form, and the gospel in its proper and strict sense, are not contrary to one another, but only different from each other; so, while they differ in some respects, they agree in others. As the infinitely glorious attributes of Jehovah, harmonize and mingle their refulgent beams, in the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ; so his holy law, and his glorious gospel, agree, and subserve the honour of each other, in the accomplishment of that redemption.

By the harmony of the law and the gospel, is

[gg] From 1 Cor. xv. 56. Mr RALPH ERSKINE infers, 'The dangerous influence of legal doctrine, that tends to keep sinners under the law; for thus they are under the power of sin. The text says, "The strength of sin is the law." The legal strain, under covert of zeal for the law, hath a native tendency to mar true holiness, and all acceptable obedience to the law; insomuch that, the greatest Legalist is the greatest Antinomian, or enemy to the law.'

meant, their *mutual subservience* to one another; or, their admirable *fitness* for securing, and advancing, the honour of each other, in subordination to the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as displayed in the person and work of the great Redeemer. They are admirably adapted to reflect mutual honour on one another, and so, to afford the most illustrious displays of the glory, of their Divine Author. The law as a covenant of works and as a rule of life, demands nothing of sinners, but what is offered and promised in the gospel; and, in the gospel, every thing is freely promised and offered to them, which the law, in any of its forms, requires of them. The gospel presents to them for their acceptance, the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Surety of such sinners as believe, which fully answers every demand of the law in its *covenant-form;* and so, magnifies it in that form, and makes it honourable. It also exhibits to them, in its offers and promises, the infinite fulness of Christ, from which, they may be regenerated and sanctified; and so, be enabled to yield such obedience to the law as a *rule of life*, as will in due time become perfect. Whilst it reveals and offers righteousness, to satisfy the law as a covenant; it promises and offers strength to obey the law as a rule. It promises all the supplies of grace and strength, which are necessary for the acceptable performance of every duty, that the law as a rule of life, requires of believers. The righteousness too, which the law as a covenant demands, and which the gospel affords, being imputed to believers, merits for them, that holiness of heart and life, which the law as a rule requires, which the gospel promises, and which is perfect in parts here,

and will be perfect in degrees hereafter. Thus in general, the law and the gospel agree together, or mutually subserve each other. But more particularly,

The law as a *covenant of works*, agrees with the gospel,

1. In its *commanding power*. Though it is altogether distinct from the gospel strictly taken, yet it is in concord with it. When a man cordially believes the gospel, he, in effect, presents perfect obedience, to the commands of the law as a covenant. When he so believes, as to "receive the gift of righteousness," of that perfect, that divinely excellent, righteousness of the last Adam; he presents it, in the hand of faith, as his only righteousness for justification, to the law and the justice of God; and so, he cannot believe with the heart, without believing unto righteousness. He cannot cordially believe the gospel, without presenting, at the same time, perfect obedience to the law. Neither is it possible for him, to yield perfect obedience to the law, otherwise than by believing the gospel. Thus, the law and the gospel unite, in serving the interests of each other. Although they are entirely distinct from each other, yet they have no separate, no interfering interests to serve. "Do we then make void the law through faith?" says the apostle Paul, "God forbid: yea, we *establish* the law[h]." The precepts of the law, and the promises of the gospel, harmoniously accord, to reflect the highest honour on each other. "Is the law," says our Apostle, "against the promises

[h] Rom. iii. 31.

of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law[i]." Does the law require from the sinner, a perfect human righteousness[k]? The gospel affords this to it, yea, much more than this,—a righteousness, which is not only perfect, but *Divine*[l]. Are the commandments of the law, "exceeding broad?" so is the righteousness of God our Saviour, revealed in the gospel. Whatever the law requires, the gospel, in the most abundant measure, supplies. Moreover, does the law command the sinner to believe in the great Redeemer[m]? From the promise of the gospel, he may be amply supplied with faith[n]. Does it enjoin him to repent of all his sins? The grace revealed and offered in the gospel, can afford him, not only an occasion, and a powerful motive, but a disposition, to "remember and turn to the Lord[o]." While the law, commands the tears of penitential sorrow to flow; the gospel, and the astonishing grace promised and offered in it, cause them to flow[p]. The authority of the law, reaches to every article of the glad tidings of the gospel, and obliges the sinner to believe these joyful tidings cordially, and with application to himself[q]. The law seals all the grace offered in the gospel; and the gospel, in its turn, seals, with the infinitely precious blood of Christ, all the requirements of the law. In a word, If the law requires perfect and perpetual obedience, as the condition of eternal life; the gospel admits, and asserts the necessity

[i] Gal. iii. 21. [k] Rom. x. 5. [l] Rom. iii. 21.
[m] Exod. xx. 3. [n] Matth. xii. 21. [o] Psal. xxii. 27.
[p] Zech. xii. 10. [q] 1 John iii. 23.

of such obedience, by affording it to the believing sinner[r].

2. The law, in its *condemning power* also, is in concord with the gospel. The terrors of the violated law, serve, under the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, to shew a convinced sinner, his extreme need of the salvation which is presented to him in the gospel[s]. The tremendous curses of the righteous law, pursue him closely, whatever path he chooses to take, until he begin to run upon gospel-ground, and then they drop the pursuit. If the law as a covenant is a fiery law, the blood of Jesus Christ presented in the gospel, in one view, is fuel for that flame, and in another, it serves to extinguish it. The payment of the sinner's debt of punishment, by his Divine Surety, offered to him in the gospel, is so complete, as abundantly to answer the high demand made by the broken law[t]. The law's demand of satisfaction for sin, is such, that none but God himself could, in a limited time, answer it; and the infinite grace of the gospel, has provided that God himself in human nature, should satisfy it. "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd[u]." The law, on the one hand, condemns all who reject the gospel[w]; and the gospel, on the other, disfavours all who finally transgress the law. The terrors of the law, frighten and impel convinced sinners to Jesus Christ; and the redeeming love manifested in the gospel, constrains and draws them to him[x]. The former, lay open the wound; and the latter,

[r] Dan. ix. 24. [s] Gal. iii. 10. [t] Gal. iii. 13.
[u] Zech. xiii. 7. [w] John iii. 18. [x] Hos. xi. 4.

applies a sovereign cure. Those, plow up the fallow ground; and this, sows the good seed in it.

3. The law, in its commanding and condemning power considered *jointly*, is in harmony with the gospel. The law, leads the sinner indirectly to Christ, and the gospel, conducts him directly to him. While "the law is our school-master unto Christ," to teach us our absolute need of him, and if necessary, to drive us as with a scourge to him [y]; the gospel presents Christ, as "the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth [z]." The law in the hand of the Holy Spirit, serves to make the awakened sinner long for, and relish, the grace of the gospel; and the gospel dignifies the law, and renders it illustrious in his view. The law magnifies the grace of the gospel, by shewing the sinner, his need of justification and salvation by that grace; and the grace of the gospel, establishes and magnifies the law [a]. That the law is holy in its precepts, just in its threatenings, and good in its promises [b], the gospel, not only declares, but seals, with the blood of the incarnate Redeemer. Whilst the precepts and penalties of the law, serve as a guard to the gospel; the doctrines, promises, and offers of the gospel, serve to support the authority and honour of the law [c]. In Christ Jesus, the precepts and threatenings of the law have, to every one that believes, their end, and the promises of the gospel, their establishment, in order to be completely performed [d]. The truth or faithfulness, pledged in the threatenings of the

[y] Gal. iii. 24. [z] Rom. x. 4. [a] Isa. xlii. 21.
[b] Rom. vii. 12. [c] Matth. v. 17. [d] 2 Cor. i. 20.

law, and the mercy, revealed in the promises of the gospel, meet together in Him. The righteousness manifested in the law, and the peace proclaimed in the gospel, do in him embrace each other[e]. The law, in the hand of the Spirit, renders the grace of the gospel, precious and desirable, in the eyes of convinced sinners; and this grace, when it is received, makes the law salutary and pleasing to them[f]. The law, is an awful Commentary on the doctrines of the gospel, especially on these: The astonishing love of God manifested in our redemption, the infinite value of the ransom paid for us, the inexpressible felicity of them who are redeemed from the curse of the law, and their infinite obligations to their God and Saviour; and the gospel, is a delightful Commentary on the high demands, and sanctions of the law. While the law is an infallible witness, that sinners of mankind have those disgraceful characters, under which, the offers and calls of the gospel are addressed to them; the gospel exhibits, in the wonderful person and work of Christ, the highest proofs of the infinite authority, and perpetual stability, of the law. In few words, though the law does not reveal a Saviour, and a justifying righteousness; yet, these having been revealed by the gospel, the law charges, and that, on pain of the greatest condemnation, every hearer of the gospel to receive them[g]. To such an infinite degree, is the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ, the fulfilment of the law, and the glory of the gospel; that sinners of mankind, are peremptorily commanded

[e] Psal. lxxxv. 10. [f] Rom. vii, 22.
[g] Mark xvi, 15, 16.

in the law, and earnestly invited in the gospel, to accept the gift of it; and to present it in the hand of faith to the law, in answer to its high demand, of infinite satisfaction for sin, and of perfect obedience as the condition of eternal life.—Thus, the law as it is the covenant of works, is in harmony with the gospel.

The law likewise as a *rule of life* to believers agrees with the gospel. When the law as a covenant, presses a man forward, or shuts him up to the faith of the gospel; the gospel urges and draws him back to the law as a rule [h]. The law, is his school-master to teach him his need of the grace of the gospel; and this grace, will have his heart and his life, regulated by no rule but the law [i]. Nothing is gospel-obedience, but obedience to the law in the hand of Christ, as a rule of duty. The gospel is no sooner believed, than obedience is yielded, both to the law as a covenant, and to the law, as a rule. The righteousness of Christ in the hand of faith, is obedience to it in the former view, and personal holiness of heart and life, to it in the latter. If the law commands believers, the grace of the gospel teaches them, to love and to practice universal holiness [k]. What the law as a rule of life, binds them to perform, the grace of the gospel, constrains and enables them to do [l]. That which, the precept of the law, requires as a duty, the promise of the gospel, affords and effects as a privilege [m]. Whatever holds the place of duty in the law, occupies the place of privilege in the gospel. Duties required in the law, are graces or ex-

[h] Lev. xi. 44. [i] 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. [k] Tit. ii. 11, 12.
[l] Lev. xx. 8. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.
[m] Ezek. xviii. 31. and xxxvi. 26, 27.

ercises of grace, in the language of the gospel. The commands of the law, reprove believers for going wrong; and the promises of the gospel, so far as they are embraced, secure their walking in the right way [n]. The former, shew them the extreme folly of backsliding; the latter, are means of healing their backslidings, and of restoring their souls [o]. The gospel or word of Christ, dwells richly in none, but in such as have the law of Christ, put into their minds, and written in their hearts. The law cannot be inscribed on the heart, without the gospel, nor the gospel, without the law. As they are found together, in the same Divine Revelation; so they dwell together harmoniously, in the same believing soul. So great is the harmony between them, that they can reside no where, *separate* from each other. While the precepts of the law, shew the redeemed, how very grateful and thankful they should be, for redeeming grace; the grace of Christ in the gospel, produces and excites that adoring gratitude. The law enjoins and excites believers, to receive daily by faith, more and more of the grace of the gospel, to qualify them, for more spiritual and lively obedience to its precepts; and the gospel supplies them with every motive, preparative, assistance, and encouragement, requisite for such obedience. The law, requires true holiness of heart and of life, and the gospel, promises and conveys this holiness. The former, shews the nature and the properties of it: the latter, the place of it in the covenant of grace. It is by the almighty influence

[n] Jer. xxxii. 40. [o] Psal. xxiii. 3.

of the gospel, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, that the law is inscribed on the hearts of believers; and, it is in consequence of having the law written on their hearts, that they desire, trust in Christ for, and relish, the blessings promised in the gospel. The law discovers to believers their duty, and the gospel, the object of duty. The law enjoins the habit and exercise of faith; the gospel presents Christ, the glorious object of faith. The law requires believers, to love God with all their heart; but it is the gospel only, that presents God in such a view, as to become an object of love to a sinner, namely, as he is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The law enjoins mourning for sin: the gospel presents Christ, as wounded for our transgressions; whom when believers view with the eye of faith, they mourn for him as for an only son, and are in bitterness for him as for a first born. In a word, The law commands them, to worship God as their God: the gospel discloses to them, both the object, and the way of acceptable worship.

Here it will be proper to remark, that these words, " I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," are the preface to the ten commandments, *as a rule of life* to the true Israel of God. According to these words, all the obedience of the redeemed of the Lord, to the precepts of his law, is founded upon his being Jehovah, and their God, and Redeemer. And it is remarkable, that, in the giving of the law at Sinai, this *offer* or *grant* of Himself, as Jehovah our God and Redeemer, is *five* times repeated. But in these words of our redeeming God, it is the doctrine and offer of his

gospel, that are expressed and repeated; and that, in order to *enforce* our obedience to every commandment of his law. The gospel, then, is that which enforces, and also insures, the sincere obedience of believers to the law as a rule of life. It is because God is the Lord and their God and Redeemer, not only in offer, but in possession, that they are enabled and constrained, as well as bound, to keep all his commandments [p].

So much for the agreement between the law and the gospel, or the mutual subservience of the one, to the other.

From the foregoing particulars, it may be inferred, That a man cannot be *an enemy to the gospel*, without being, at the same time, *an enemy to the law*. Every enemy to the gospel, is, in the same degree, an enemy to the perfection, spirituality, and honour of the law. The law and the gospel, are in such harmony with each other, as to have no divided interests. The man, then, who is destitute of unfeigned love to the doctrines, offers, and promises of the gospel, how strict soever his profession of religion may be, is really an *Antinomian*, an enemy to the honour of the holy law. He is an adversary to the honour of the law, as a *covenant of works:* for, by rejecting the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ, tendered to him in the gospel, he refuses to present to the law in that form, the *only* righteousness, by which, it can be magnified and made honourable. He is an enemy likewise, to the authority and honour of the law, as a *rule of*

[p] Luke i. 74, 75. 1 Pet. i. 15—19.

duty: for, by his disbelief of the offers, and promises of the blessed gospel, he refuses to receive from the fulness of Christ, that grace, without which, he cannot honour the law, with so much as a single act of acceptable obedience.

Hence also we may learn, that, as the *law is a transcript* of all the moral perfections of God, so likewise *is the gospel.* The law is the image of the holiness, justice, and goodness of Jehovah, and therefore it is "holy, and just, and good; but so also is the gospel. Accordingly, the gospel is styled, "the *glorious* gospel of the blessed God[q]." The glory of the holiness, justice, and goodness of God, as well as of his wisdom and faithfulness, shines brightly in the law; but it is displayed still more illustriously, in the gospel. These glorious attributes are delineated in the law, but, in the gospel, they are painted in the most glowing colours. Much of God is to be seen in the law; but, in the gospel, his infinitely glorious image, is exhibited more to the life, and is more eminently conspicuous[r]. The honour of his holy law, therefore, and also of his glorious gospel, is infinitely dear to him. He takes infinite complacency, in beholding his righteous law, magnified and made honourable, by the surety-righteousness of his dear Son; and in seeing a multitude, which no man can number, justified and sanctified according to his gospel. And all who are renewed, after his image, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, do evidence this renovation of heart, by delighting in his law, and by loving and admiring his gospel; by rejoicing

[q] 1 Tim. i. 11. [r] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

greatly in imputed righteousness, by which, the demands of his law as a covenant are all answered, and in salvation by sovereign grace, in which, the promises of his gospel, are all performed.

If a man has attained a saving and experimental knowledge of the gospel, he will undoubtedly *evidence it*, by obedience of heart and life, to the law in the hand of Christ as a rule of duty. A man can never perform holy obedience to the law, so long as he remains ignorant of the gospel: but, when he begins spiritually to discern the truth, suitableness, and glory, of the doctrine of redeeming grace, he will then begin to perform spiritual and sincere obedience, to the law of Christ as a rule. "Christ died for all" who were given him by the Father, "that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again[s]." When a man spiritually discerns, and sincerely loves, the grace of the gospel, he at the same time, sees and loves the holiness of the law. The consequence will be, that he will sincerely, and cheerfully obey the law. He will yield this obedience, not only, because the authority of God obliges him, and the love of Christ constrains him; but, because he discerns the beauty of the holiness that is in the law itself, and loves it. While the law as a covenant, is the appointed means of convincing the secure sinner, of his need of that justifying righteousness, which is offered to him in the gospel; the gospel, bringing righteousness and salvation to him, is the instituted means of conciliating his affection, to the

[s] 2 Cor. v. 15.

law as a rule of duty. Every one, then, who knows by experience, the boundless grace of the gospel, will perform sincere, cheerful, and constant, obedience to the law as a rule.

Is every thing that is required in the law, provided and promised in the gospel? Then every duty is, at the same time, a *privilege* or *advantage*, to a real Christian. "Godliness with contentment is great gain[t]." Practical godliness is the most profitable, pleasant, satisfying, and permanent gain, both for this world, and that which is to come. A true believer is, in proportion as he is sanctified, *rich* in faith, and in good works. Although the exercise of graces, and the performance of duties, gain nothing at the hand of God, for the believer; yet they *themselves*, are unspeakably great gain to him. He accounts it a privilege, and a pleasure, to have duties to perform; and to have a disposition given him, to perform them to the glory of his God and Saviour. For, as there can be no happiness without holiness; so, the believer is comfortable and happy, in proportion as he is holy. The more he believes the gospel with application, and trusts cordially in the Lord Jesus, for salvation to himself in particular, and the more his "faith worketh by love;" so much the more communion with Christ, and enjoyment of God as his infinite portion, does he attain. The legalist expects happiness *for* his duties, but the true believer enjoys it *in* them; and the *less* he expects for them, the *more* he enjoys in them.

Finally, Do the law and the gospel harmoniously

[t] 1 Tim. vi. 6.

agree, and subserve the honour of each other? Then, let believers always take heed, that they do not set them *in opposition to one another*. Beware, O believer, of ever setting the law in hostile opposition to the gospel, or the gospel, in opposition to the law. Never, in your exercise of graces, or performance of duties, set them at variance the one with the other. Study to understand clearly, on the one hand, the difference, and on the other, the agreement between them; that knowing distinctly, in what respects they differ, and in what, they agree, you may, in your exercise, make the one subservient to the honour of the other, and both subservient to the glory of God, in your sanctification and consolation. Clear and just views, especially of the agreement between the law and the gospel, tend exceedingly, under the influences of the Spirit of truth, to promote an evangelical, holy, and cheerful frame of spirit. Under such views, you will be able to guard the more effectually, against setting the law in opposition to the gospel, by relying on your own graces and duties, for a right to the favour and enjoyment of God; and against setting the gospel at variance with the law, by taking the smallest encouragement from the gospel, to neglect the performance of any of the duties, required in the law.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LAW BY THE GOSPEL.

ALTHOUGH, in the immediately preceding Chapter, I have anticipated some of the thoughts whic will be expressed here; yet the subject of this Chapter, is of such inexpressible importance, that I cannot forbear considering it by itself. After the apostle Paul had, in the third Chapter of his epistle to the Romans, asserted and proved, that all mankind are sinners, and, that the justification of believing sinners in the sight of God, is utterly unattainable by their own righteousness, and is entirely founded on the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed by grace, and received by faith; he has, in the following words, obviated an objection, which he foresaw would be made to that fundamental doctrine: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law[u]." One of the objections then made, and still urged, by the enemies of the gospel, against the doctrine of a sinner's free justification, for the righteousness of Christ received by faith, is, That it derogates from the honour and obligation of the law, nay, that it annuls or abrogates the law. "Do we then," says he, by asserting that a man is justified by faith only, and not by the works of the law, "make void," or nullify the obligation of the moral law? With deep abhorrence of such an insinuation,

[u] Rom. iii. 31.

he replies, "God forbid;" far be it from us: on the contrary, we, by that doctrine, "do establish the law;" as if he had said, "We are so far from making void or annulling the law, through faith, that we thereby establish, and make it stand in all its force." By the law here, the Apostle cannot mean, the Ceremonial law; for, by the word of faith, as preached by the apostles of Christ, this *was* made void; but the *moral* law, and that, both as a *covenant of works*, and as a *rule of life*. By faith, in this place, the Apostle seems to mean, both the *doctrine* of faith, and the *grace* of faith. The doctrine of faith, is the gospel strictly taken, as distinguished from the law. The grace of faith, is that grace of the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of regenerate persons, by the exercise of which, they receive that doctrine, and the righteousness and salvation exhibited in it.

It will be proper here, in order to prevent mistakes, concerning what is afterwards to be advanced, to remark that, To make the law void is, so to abrogate, abolish, or set it aside, as to prevent it from being any longer binding on the conscience. It is, to annul the Divine *authority*, and *obligation* of its precepts and penalties. The moral law, as the law of the infinitely glorious Jehovah, is enforced by all his sovereign, and immutable authority. His infinite authority enforces every precept of it, and lays every rational creature, under the firmest obligations possible, to yield perfect obedience to it. Now, to make this law void, is, to set aside its high authority and obligation; or, to decline the authority, and to dissolve the obligation, of its righteous precepts. Not that any man *can* do this effectually; but, his attempting

either directly or indirectly to do it, is as criminal, as if he could accomplish his design. To make it void, is also to attempt setting aside the *perfection*, *spirituality*, and *great extent* of it. A man may be said to make void the law, when he practically declares that, the perfection, spirituality, and vast extent of it, are not to be regarded; or, when he puts it off as a covenant, with imperfect, and even with carnal, selfish, superficial, and partial obedience. Every sinner is guilty of this, who goes about to establish his own righteousness, in order to his justification; or endeavours to satisfy the law, with imperfect, instead of perfect obedience, with carnal, instead of spiritual performances, and with partial, instead of universal obedience. To make the law void, is likewise to invalidate the *perpetuity* of it. Not that any sinner has it in his power, effectually do to this; for the moral law continues, to be of immutable and eternal obligation, upon all who are under it: but, he attempts to abolish the perpetuity of it, with respect to himself, by persuading himself that, although it originally obliged him to perform perfect obedience, yet now, in consequence of the meditation of Christ, it obliges him to yield such obedience no longer[w]; and, by presuming to satisfy the requirements of it as a covenant, with sincere, instead of perfect obedience; as if it ceased to require perfection of obedience, any longer. Moreover, when sinners under the curse of it, labour to persuade themselves, that it cannot now exact from them, perfect and perpetual obedience, on pain of its tremendous curse; or,

[w] Jude ver. 4.

when they stifle their convictions, and try to keep their consciences easy, under the condemning sentence of it; they do what they can, to make it void. In few words, they may be said to make the law void, when they deliberately set aside any of the *uses* of it. Though it cannot, since the entrance of sin into the world, justify sinners, on the ground of their own obedience to it; yet, as was observed above, it is of standing use to sinners, as well as to saints. Now, if sinners set aside any of its uses, or refuse to "use it lawfully," they thereby treat it with contempt, as if it was useless and insignificant. It is in these ways especially, that self-righteous men, attempt to make void the law of God.

I shall now endeavour to shew, that all true believers do, through faith, not only, nor make void the moral law; but do, on the contrary, establish it, or make it stand in all its force. To establish the law, is, as was hinted above, to make all the infinite authority and obligation of it stand firm, or to place them on their original and immoveable basis, and instead of invalidating, to confirm or strengthen them. Believers then, do by faith, that is, by the *doctrine*, and the *grace* of faith, establish the law.

In the *first* place, By the *doctrine* of faith, they do not make the law void, but do establish it, and that, both as a covenant of works, and as a rule of life.

1. By the *doctrine* of faith, or the gospel strictly taken, all true believers, and faithful ministers of the word, do establish the law as it is *a covenant of works*. For, in the 1*st* place, It is the doctrine of faith that shews men, How firm and irreversible, the law as a covenant is, and how infinitely con-

cerned, the glorious Majesty of heaven is, for the stability and honour of that holy law. According to that doctrine, He will save no transgressors of it, but upon condition of his only begotten Son's being made under it, as their Surety, and of his answering completely, all the demands of it in their stead. He will not save them, from the full execution of its righteous and awful penalty, but upon Christ's enduring of it for them; nor account them righteous and entitled to eternal life, but upon His performing as their Substitute, the perfect obedience which it requires as the condition of life. Thus, by the doctrine of faith, the sovereign authority of the law in its covenant-form, is acknowledged and declared, its infinite obligation on sinners of mankind, is confirmed, and its honour is completely secured. *2d*, According to the doctrines of grace, in general, and to the doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith, without the works of the law, in particular; the law in that form is, as has been already said, of standing use, to convince sinners of their sin and misery, to discover to them, their need of a better righteousness than their own, and so, to render Christ and his perfect righteousness, precious to such of them as believe. A sinner must be convinced by the law, that justification on the footing of his own obedience, is absolutely impossible, before he will listen, to what the gospel says of Christ and his righteousness[x]. Accordingly, the Spirit of God does not lead a man to Christ, by he gospel, without first convincing him of sin, and of his want of righteousness, by the law. *3d*, By that

[x] Rom. vii. 9.

doctrine we are informed that, the law received a complete answer to all its high demands, by the unsinning obedience, and satisfactory death, of the Lord Jesus, the Surety of elect sinners. We are thereby instructed that, He came into the world, "not to destroy, but to fulfil the law[y];" and that, he "is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth[z]." According to the doctrine of faith, the law as a covenant, receives from our Divine Surety, all the obedience and satisfaction which it can demand. He, in the room, and as the Representative, of an elect world, fulfilled all the righteousness of it[a]. He yielded to it, perfect holiness of human nature, perfect obedience of life, and complete satisfaction for sin: and from his Divine nature, united to the human, in his infinitely glorious person, his whole righteousness has derived such infinite value, as to be strictly meritorious of eternal life, for his spiritual seed. According to that doctrine, the law in its federal form, is far more honoured by the righteousness of the second Adam, than it was dishonoured by the disobedience of the first. It is represented as honoured, not only by a *perfect* righteousness, but by the righteousness of GOD, the righteousness of Him who is God as well as man. In proportion to the stupendous humiliation of the Son of God, who stooped so low, as to become *subject* to a law, which was adapted only to *creatures who as such are infinitely beneath him;*— is, the honour done to the precept and penalty of that law, by HIS obeying of the one, and HIS enduring of the other. It required only a human

[y] Matth. v. 17. [z] Rom. x. 4. [a] Matth. iii. 15.

righteousness; but it is infinitely honoured with one which is *Divine*[b]. Now, by this consummate, this transcendently glorious righteousness, which is revealed in the gospel, the sovereign authority, and high obligation of the law, are most illustriously displayed, and most firmly established.

2. By the *doctrine* of faith, the law is also established as *a rule of life* to believers. According to this doctrine, it is established in the hand of the Son of God, the glorious Mediator, whom the eternal Father "hath given for a *Commander* to the people[c]," and hath set as his King and Lawgiver, "upon his holy hill of Zion[d]." In the hand of the adorable Mediator, the sovereign authority of the law, as the instrument of government in his spiritual kingdom, and as the rule of duty in his holy covenant, is confirmed; and the high obligation of it, is not only confirmed, but increased. Although believers are, in their justification, delivered from the law as a covenant of works[e]; yet, according to the gospel, they are represented as "being, not without law to God, but under the law to Christ[f]." In the doctrine of faith, the eternal obligation of the law on them, is declared: obedience to it, is enforced by the strongest motives, and represented as performed under the best influences, from the best principles, and for the best ends. According to that doctrine, all believers are bound by infinite authority, to obey; they are enabled, sincerely to obey; they are constrained by redeeming love, to obey; they resolve and delight, in depend-

[b] 2 Cor. v. 21. Isa. xlii. 21. [c] Isa. lv. 4. [d] Psal. ii. 6.
[e] Rom. vii. 4, 6. [f] 1 Cor. ix. 21. Gal. vi. 2.

ance on promised grace, to obey; and they *cannot but* obey, the law as a rule of duty. The love of Christ, as revealed in the gospel, urges them; the blood of Christ, redeems them; the Spirit of Christ, enables them; and the exceeding great and precious promises of Christ, encourage them, to obey, and to yield spiritual and acceptable obedience. The holy law as a rule, is written on their hearts; and therefore, they "consent unto it that it is good," and "delight in it after the inward man." While they do not obey it *for* life, but *from* life, they account obedience to it, not only their duty, but their privilege and their pleasure. Thus, according to the doctrine of faith, they present, in the hand of faith, *perfect* righteousness to the law as a covenant of works; and they perform, as the fruit of faith, *sincere* obedience to it as a rule of duty. And so effectually do they, by the doctrine of faith, establish the law as a rule of duty, that they never account their obedience, to any of the precepts of it, *sincere* and acceptable, but in proportion as their performance of it, flows from the *unfeigned faith* of that doctrine. In *their* view, nothing is obedience to it, but what proceeds from evangelical principles, and is excited by evangelical motives.

In the *last* place, By the *grace* of faith also, believers do establish the law, and that, both as a covenant of works, and as a rule of life.

1. By the *grace* of faith, they do not make void the law, but, on the contrary, they establish it as it is a *covenant of works*. Sinners who are destitute of the grace of faith, have such mean, such disparaging notions of the holy law; as to offer to it, in answer to its demand of *perfect* obedi-

ence as the condition of life, their own partial, superficial, and polluted works, instead of the *perfect* righteousness of Jesus Christ. But true believers, have such high and honourable sentiments of the authority, and obligation, as well as of the perfection, spirituality, and vast extent, of the Divine law in its federal form; as to receive, and present in the hand of faith, to it, the consummate and glorious righteousness of their adorable Surety. Instead of making void the law, they, by the habit and exercise of their holy faith, consult, in the most effectual manner, the stability and honour of its precepts and penalties. Instead of presuming to put it off as a covenant, with their own mean and imperfect performances, they, by the exercise of their faith, appropriate and present to it, the infinitely perfect and meritorious righteousness of their Divine Redeemer, as the only ground of their security from eternal death, and of their title to eternal life. By faith, they receive and exhibit to it, Christ's holiness of human nature, and obedience of life, in answer to its demand of perfect obedience as the condition of life; and his suffering of death, in answer to its demand of infinite satisfaction for sin. Thus, by the habit and exercise of their faith, they recognize and assert the sovereign authority, and high obligation, of it as a covenant; and so, they establish and make it honourable in that form. By presenting to it, the only righteousness which can fully satisfy its just demands, they practically assert the Divine and immutable authority of it, as well as, the equity and reasonableness of its demands. "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord

have I *righteousness* and strength: even to him shall men come. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be *justified*, and shall glory [g]." "I will make mention of *thy righteousness*, even of thine only [h]." "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; --- that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but *that* which is through the faith of Christ, the *righteousness* which is of God *by faith* [i]." "The Lord is well pleased for *his righteousness' sake;* he will magnify the law and make it honourable [k]."

2. By the *grace* of faith, believers do not make void the law, but do establish it likewise as a *rule of life.* Instead of setting it aside as the rule of duty, faith makes it stand in all its binding force. By the habit and exercise of their faith, the saints not only believe that, the authority of the law, in the hand of the glorious Mediator, is infinite, immutable, and eternal, and that, the obligation, which it lays on them even to perfect obedience, is firm and unalterable; but they derive, from the fulness of Christ, continual supplies of grace, to enable them, to perform sincere and increasing obedience, to all the commands of it. By the exercise of faith, they receive from his fulness, that conformity of heart to the holy law, which is perfect in *parts*, and that conformity both of heart and of life to it, which will afterwards be perfect in *degrees.* And when they shall attain perfect conformity, or ability to yield perfect obedience to it,

[g] Isa. xlv. 24, 25.
[h] Psal. lxxi. 16.
[i] Philip. iii. 8, 9.
[k] Isa. xlii. 21.

in the mansions of glory; this, they shall attain as the end of their faith, as the completion of that eternal salvation, which they receive by faith. All acceptable obedience to the law in the hand of Christ, must be "the obedience of faith;" obedience, springing from vital union with Him by faith, as the principle of it, and performed in consequence of grace derived by faith, from his overflowing fulness. As it is believers and they only, who are under the law as a rule in the hand of the Mediator; so, it is they and they only, who are enabled to perform that sincere, that holy obedience, which flows from faith working by love. That faith, is neither a true nor a living faith, which is not accompanied with sincere, and universal, obedience to the law of Christ; and that obedience, is neither sincere, nor universal, nor acceptable to God, which does not proceed from the habit and exercise of a living faith [l]. Till a man have saving faith implanted in his heart, by the omnipotent agency of the Holy Spirit, he can do nothing but transgress the commandments of God's holy law [m]. He can trample upon the authority, and despise the obligation of it; but he cannot, either in principle, or in practice, establish them. It is only they who are justified and sanctified, by the instrumentality of faith, that begin and advance in such holy obedience, as honours and establishes the law as a rule of duty. We may as soon suppose, that a living man can be without vital acts, as, that a man, who is by faith vitally united to Christ, can live without yielding *such* obedience to

[l] Heb. xi. 6. [m] Prov. xxi. 4.

his law. When that living faith which worketh by love, is implanted and increased in his heart, vital motions, and acts of spiritual obedience, cannot but follow. Such a man, will not only account it a privilege and a pleasure to him, to yield sincere obedience to the law as the rule of his duty, in time; but will rejoice in the cheering prospect, of being able to honour it with perfect obedience, through eternity. He "delights in it after the inward man;" and therefore he rejoices in the hope that, by the grace of his adorable Redeemer, he shall be eternally *bound* by it, and eternally *conformed* to it.

Thus it is evident that, true believers, and faithful ministers of the gospel, do not, either by the *doctrine*, or the *grace* of faith, make void the law of God; but on the contrary, do establish it, and that, both as a covenant of works, and as a rule of life.

From what has been said, we may learn what *reason* we have, *highly to esteem* the Divine law. The establishment of this holy law, both by the doctrine and the grace of faith, has entered deeply, into the wonderful plan of our redemption by Jesus Christ. That amazing scheme has been so devised, as to secure, in the most effectual and astonishing manner, the stability and honour of the law, as well as, the manifested glory of the sovereign Lawgiver. As the ultimate end, which God hath proposed to himself in our redemption, is, the glory of his infinite perfections; so, his chief subordinate end, as the righteous Governor of the universe, is, the honour of his holy law. Such is the inestimable value, that Jehovah the Father sets up-

on his righteous law; that, rather than suffer the honour of it to be in the least obscured, he would expose his only begotten, his infinitely dear Son, to the deepest abasement, the most direful anguish, and the most ignominious and tormenting death. He would have his only Son, in the human nature, to live a holy and righteous life, under the curse of his law, in order to answer its demand of perfect obedience, as the condition of life; and to endure the infinite execution of that curse, due to his elect for sin, so as to be brought to the dust of death, in order to answer its demand of infinite satisfaction for sin. The Lord Jesus, according to the everlasting covenant made with him, must submit to all this humiliation, service, and suffering; that the honour of the Divine law, might be vindicated, and the sovereign authority of it, established. Ought not we, then, to regard the law of God, with the highest esteem and veneration, and to tremble at the most distant thought, of ever disobeying any of its holy commands?

Is the law established by the gospel? Surely the gospel, then, *cannot have the smallest tendency to licentiousness*, either in principle or in practice. If it tends to establish the sovereign authority of the Divine law, it cannot, surely, at the same time, tend to weaken or set aside that authority. The gospel, when it is accompanied with the demonstration of the Spirit of God, and is received in the love of it, does not only excite the believer, to obey the law as a rule of duty; but it is *the only doctrine, that can excite* and dispose him, to yield to it, voluntary and sincere obedience. It does not only establish the law, but it is *the only doctrine*

that, infinite wisdom employs, to establish it; the only "doctrine, which is according to godliness." It is true that, this heavenly doctrine, which, God hath made the city of refuge for guilty sinners, is, by many, alas! made a sanctuary for sin, and so, is wickedly abused to licentiousness. But it is one thing, to view the gospel *in itself*, and in its *genuine tendency*; and another, to consider it as it is perversely abused by wicked men[n]. The immediate principle, of all acceptable obedience to the law as a rule of life, is supreme love to God; but, we cannot love God supremely, except we first know and believe his love to us, as it is exhibited to us in the blessed gospel. "We love him," says the apostle John, "because he first loved us[o]." As the sun cannot be without light and heat, so the faith of Christ and of redeeming love, as offered to us in the gospel, cannot be without that love to Christ and to God in him, which, "is the fulfilling of the law[p]."

The second Adam's perfect holiness of human nature, and obedience of life, to the *precept* of the law as a covenant, are *as necessary* to the justification of sinners, as his suffering of its *penalty* is. The doctrine of justification by faith, establishes the law, the *whole* law, the honour of the precept, as well as that of the penal sanction. But this it could not do, if it did not represent the righteousness of Jesus Christ, as consisting in his *active* obedience, as well as in his passive. Active obedience, strictly speaking, cannot be said to *satisfy* vindictive justice, for sin. And, on the other hand,

[n] Rom. iii. 8. [o] 1 John iv. 19. [p] Rom. xiii. 10.

'Suffering for punishment, gives *right and title unto nothing*, only *satisfies* for something; nor doth it deserve any reward[q].' Christ's satisfaction for sin, could not render his perfect obedience to the precept, unnecessary; nor could his perfect obedience, make his satisfaction for sin by suffering the penalty, unnecessary, because it was not of the same kind. The one, is that which answers the law's demand of perfect obedience, as the ground of title to eternal life: the other, is that which answers its demand of complete satisfaction to Divine justice, for sin. The meritorious obedience of Christ to the precept, could not satisfy the penal sanction; and the sufferings and death of Christ, could not satisfy the precept of the law. The commandment of the law as a covenant, requires *doing* for life: the curse of that law, demands *dying* as the punishment of sin. These, though they are never to be separated as grounds of justification, yet are carefully to be distinguished. The perfect obedience of Christ, is as necessary to entitle believers to eternal life, as his suffering of death is, to secure them from eternal death. His satisfaction for sin, applied by faith, renders them innocent or guiltless of death; and his obedience, makes them righteous or worthy of life[r]. As the latter, then, is as necessary to complete their justification, according to the gospel, as the former; so, it is as requisite as the former, to establish the honour of the law.

It is evident also from the foregoing particulars, That the righteousness of Christ, which is revealed

[q] OWEN on Justification, p. 384. [r] Rom. v. 19.

in the gospel, and which is presented, in the hand of faith, to the law as a covenant, is not only the meritorious cause, but *the matter*, of our justification before God, and in the eye of the law. It is right, indeed, to style it, the meritorious cause of justification; but this is not sufficient: it is besides, the *matter* of it. Many Pharisaical professors of religion have admitted, that the righteousness of Christ is the meritorious cause of justification; that is, as they understand the phrase, That Christ by his righteousness has merited, that our own obedience should justify us. It is not enough then to say, That his consummate righteousness is the meritorious cause, but beside, that it is the *matter* of our justification; the very righteousness *for* which, or on account of which, we are justified. The righteousness of our Divine Surety, received by faith, and according to the doctrine of faith, imputed to us, is that which justifies, that which is the immediate and the only ground of justification; and that only, in which it can be safe, consistently with the authority and honour of the law, to stand before the dreadful tribunal of the omniscient, and righteous Judge of the world.

The Divine law is established and honoured *more*, in the *salvation of one sinner*, than in the damnation of all the sons of men. In the justification and salvation of a believing sinner, both the precept and the penalty of the law, are established and honoured; but in the damnation of unbelievers, it is the penal sanction *only*, that is honoured. The holy precept will never, in their case, be honoured with obedience, far less with perfect obedience. The convinced and alarmed sinner, who wishes to believe

in the Lord Jesus, may, for his encouragement, warrantably and successfully, plead that, at the throne of grace.

Is the holy law as a rule of life, put into the reader's mind, and written on his heart? Then it *rejoices* his heart. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart[s]." The apostle Paul accordingly says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man[t]." When a man is justified, and as an evidence of that, is sanctified; he rejoices to think that, the law as a covenant is honoured and established, by the righteousness which his faith receives for his justification; and that, the law as a rule is established, by the grace which his faith derives from Christ, for his sanctification. He rejoices to reflect that, as the law is established for ever, so it is "holy, and just, and good." Instead of wishing, that it were less extensive, or spiritual, or strict; he rejoices that every command, and even every threatening, are what they are. He meditates on the holy commandments of God with delight, and takes pleasure, in hearing them explained to him, and enforced upon him. Nothing, perhaps, is a surer symptom of reigning hypocrisy in a man, than to take pleasure in hearing the promises and blessings of the gospel, preached to him; but, to disrelish all such discourses, as, even by evangelical motives, enforce the duties of the law upon him. It is only the man, who is secretly resolved *not* to perform *all* his duties, that commonly is unwilling to hear of them.

What has been said may serve to suggest to us, How *deep and inveterate*, the depravity of human

[s] Psal. xix. 8. [t] Rom. vii. 22.

nature is. Unregenerate men, either suspect that the law is made void, if it be asserted, that "a man is justified by faith without the works of it;" or they suppose, that good works are unnecessary. The spirit which is in them, is either that of the Pharisee, or that of the Libertine. They are ready to conclude that, if they are not to be justified on the ground of their own obedience to the law, the authority of the law is annulled[u]; or that, if their works are to form no part of their righteousness for justification, they need not perform good works at all. They choose to be at liberty, either "to establish their own righteousness" in the affair of justification, or to continue secure in the love and practice of sin; either to expect justification by the law as a covenant, or to trample upon the authority of the law as a rule. They either quarrel with the gospel, as if it made void the law; or dishonour the law, as if it was an enemy to the gospel. To leave the self-righteous man, no works of his own to boast of, is too humbling to be endured. It appears strange to him, that he himself should do nothing, in order to merit his justification. Whenever he reads or hears that, justification is by faith only, "without the deeds of the law," he is disposed to count it a licentious doctrine. He can see no necessity for his obedience, but to *merit* Divine favour and eternal life by it. And no sooner does a man, under the dominion of enmity to God and his law, pretend to be justified without his own works; than he neglects good works, as if they were wholly unnecessary. Thus, do unregenerate men

[u] Gal iii. 19.

discover their inveterate enmity, both against the law, and the gospel of God.

Was it requisite that the Lord Jesus, in order to repair the honour of the law, should, as the Surety of elect sinners, endure the full execution of its condemning sentence, due to them for sin? We may hence see, what a *malignant, detestable, and horrible thing*, sin is. How exceeding sinful, how infinitely displeasing to the Lord, and how injurious to the honour of his righteous law, must it be; when even his own dear Son must suffer infinite punishment, and that without the smallest abatement, in order to satisfy his justice, and to vindicate the honour of his law! How inconceivably detestable must it be, to the holy Lord God, seeing he chose rather, that his only begotten Son, should endure all the tremendous punishment of it, than that it should pass unpunished! Should not we, then, learn to abhor, to repent of, and to forsake, all manner of sin?

Is it by the doctrine and the grace of faith, that we establish the law? Then it is plain, that they who transform the gospel or doctrine of faith, into *a new law*, requiring faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, as the proper conditions of salvation, do thereby *make void the law*. By substituting sincere faith, and sincere obedience, in the room of perfect obedience, as grounds of title to justification, they make void the law as a covenant; and, by inventing what they call gospel-precepts, requiring sincerity only, in the place of those old and immutable precepts, which require of believers, perfect obedience, they invalidate the authority of the law as a rule. By asserting that, 'Christ having satisfied for the breach of the old law of works, hath

procured and given a new law, a remedial law, or a law of milder terms than the old, suited to our fallen state, and accepting of sincere obedience, instead of that perfect obedience which the old law required;' that, 'Christ hath by his death obtained, that our sincere obedience to this remedial law, should be accepted for a gospel-righteousness, and that we are truly justified before God, by gospel-works;' that, 'The act of faith as the principle of all sincere obedience, is our righteousness, which entitles us to justification and eternal life;' and that, 'The act of faith, is our justifying righteousness, not as it receives the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but as it is our obedience to that new law:' by these assertions, I say, they set aside the obligation of the moral law, and so make it void. Though such men have usually been called Legalists; yet, perhaps, they may, with more propriety, be termed Antinomians, or, enemies to the authority and honour of the Divine law [w]. They undermine, as was already hinted, the whole authority and honour of it, both as a covenant of works, and as a rule of life. Reader, the moment, you rely on your faith and obedience, for a title to justification before God, you thereby rob the law as a covenant, both of its commanding and condemning power; and no sooner do you satisfy yourself, with yielding merely sincere obedience, instead of pressing on to perfection, than you invalidate the high obligation of the law as a rule of duty.

Finally, It may hence also be inferred, That it is *the first duty* of every unregenerate sinner, to

[w] See SIMEON's Helps to Composition, Skel. 71.

come to Jesus Christ, and to trust cordially in Him, for deliverance from the law as a covenant, and for ability to perform acceptable obedience to the law as a rule. Be assured, O secure sinner, that you cannot otherwise, be delivered from the law as a covenant of works, than by union with the second Adam, and communion with him in his righteousness; and that, without deliverance from the dominion of the law as a covenant, you cannot be saved from the guilt and dominion of sin. "The strength of sin is the law [x]." Now it is absolutely impossible for you, ever to attain union with Christ, and communion with him in his righteousness, otherwise than by a true, and a living faith. "The righteousness of God," of him, who is God in our nature, "is, by *faith* of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe [y]." Believe then in the Lord Jesus, that by means of faith, you may be found in him, and be justified in him. Trust in him who is "Jehovah our Righteousness," for justification, and complete salvation. Receive the gift of his glorious righteousness, and, as a guilty sinner, rely upon it, for all your title to justification before God. Present it, in the hand of faith, as your justifying righteousness, to the law as a covenant of works, in answer to its just demands, of perfect obedience and of complete satisfaction for sin. So shall you, by faith, establish the law as it is a covenant of works. Trust in Christ also, for grace and strength, to perform sincere obedience to the law as a rule of life. Relying on his consummate righteousness, for all your

[x] 1 Cor. xv. 56. [y] Rom. iii. 22.

title to sanctification and glorification, trust in him with all your heart, for sufficient supplies of sanctifying and comforting grace, to enable you to yield acceptable obedience to the law as a rule, and to press on toward perfection of obedience; and by this obedience of faith, you will establish his law as a rule of duty. By well doing, you will put to silence the ignorance of such foolish men, as presume to say, That the doctrine and faith of the gospel, are unfriendly to the interests of true morality [z]. Indeed, both the doctrine and the grace of faith, are evidently, yea, and *designedly*, injurious to *Heathen morality*, as well as to *Pharisaical righteousness*. But with regard to *true morality*, which forms a necessary part of godliness, or evan-

[z] This reminds me of what Theodorus, long ago, replied to Philocles; who was often hinting, that he preached doctrines which tended to licentiousness; because he enlarged diligently and frequently, upon faith in Jesus Christ. 'I preach salvation by Jesus Christ,' said Theodorus; 'and give me leave to ask, whether you know what salvation by Christ means?' Philocles began to blush, and would have declined an answer.—'No,' said Theodorus: 'you must permit me to insist upon a reply. Because, if it be a right one, it will justify me and my conduct: if it be a wrong one, it will prove, that you blame you know not what; and, that you have more reason to inform yourself, than to censure others.' This disconcerted him still more. Upon which Theodorus proceeded. 'Salvation by Jesus Christ means, not only a deliverance from the guilt, but also from the power of sin. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; redeem us from our vain conversation," as well as deliver us from the wrath to come. 'Go now, Philocles, and tell the world that, by teaching these doctrines, I promote the cause of licentiousness. And you will be just as rational, just as candid, just as true, as if you should affirm, that the fire-men, by playing the engine, and pouring in water, burnt your house to the ground, and laid your furniture in ashes.'

gelical holiness; instead of being, in the smallest degree, injurious to this, they directly tend to it, yea, and they are the necessary, the fundamental principles of it. Sooner might fire be without heat, and a solid body be without weight, than a true faith of the gospel, be without evangelical holiness.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE OF BEING DEAD TO THE LAW AS A COVENANT OF WORKS, WITH A HIGHLY IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCE OF IT.

THE apostle Paul, when speaking, in his epistle to the Romans, of this important privilege, expresses himself thus: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become *dead* to the law by the body of Christ." "But now we are *delivered* from the law, that being *dead* wherein we were held[a]." By the law, in these passages, our Apostle evidently means, not so much the ceremonial, as the *moral* law, under the form of *a covenant of works*. For, it is the same law that says, "A man should not steal, and should not commit adultery[b]." It is also the law which "says to them who are under it, what things soever it says; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God;" the law, by which "is the knowledge of sin;" and which is not "made void through faith," but on the contrary, "is established[c]." It

[a] Rom. vii. 4, 6.
[b] Rom. ii. 21, 22.
[c] Rom. iii. 19, 20, 31.

is the law likewise, which "entered that the offence might abound[d];" and of which, the Apostle speaks thus: "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." "I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." "The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." "Sin by the commandment, became exceeding sinful." "We know that the law is spiritual." "I consent unto the law that it is good." "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." "With the mind, I myself serve the law of God[e]." The law in question, is that law, the work of which, "the Gentiles shew to be written in their hearts[f];" that law, by the transgression of which, "Jews and Gentiles are all under sin[g];" that law, against which "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God[h];" and that law, without which "there is no transgression[i]." It is also the law, to which, as their first husband, the believers in Rome, were, in their unregenerate state, espoused, and by which, "they were held[k]." But the most, if not all, of those believers, were *Gentiles*[l]; who were never held by the ceremonial law of the Jews, and, therefore,

[d] Rom. v. 20. [e] Rom. vii. 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 22, 25.
[f] Rom. ii. 15. [g] Rom. iii 9. [h] Rom. iii. 23.
[i] Rom. iv. 15. [k] Rom. vii. 4, 6. [l] Rom. i. 13. and xi. 13.

could not be said to have been delivered from it. In a word, it is that law, "the *righteousness* of which, was *fulfilled in*" *those believers* [m]. Now, in the most, if not in all of those passages, the things asserted by our Apostle, are *peculiar to the moral law*. This, then, is the law which he had in view, when he affirmed to those believers, That they were become dead to, or were delivered from, the law, and that the law in which they had been held, was dead to them. But least they should imagine, that it was the law of creation, and the law as a rule of life, to which they were dead; he compared the law of which he was speaking, to the law of a husband [n], which is a *covenant* or contract between him and his spouse, and which establishes her relation to him, as long as they both live. By this comparison, he plainly hinted to them, that it was the moral law, not as a rule of life, but as a covenant of works *only*, to which they were dead. The believers at Rome, then, were dead to the law in its *covenant-form*, or were delivered from it, and it was dead to them; so that, it could no longer *hold* them, in subjection to its precept of perfect obedience as the condition of life, nor to its sentence of condemnation for sin [o].

As it was the privilege of the Christians in Rome; so it is the privilege of all true Christians, in every place, and in every age, that they are dead to the law as a covenant of works, and that the law in *that form*, is dead to them. They are dead to it, that is, they are delivered from the dominion, or obligation, of it in *that* form, and also from a

[m] Rom. viii. 4. [n] Rom. vii. 2, 3. [o] Rom. vii. 6.

prevailing desire to be under it. The righteousness of the second Adam, by which he fully answered, in their stead, all the requirements of it as a covenant, is graciously imputed to them; and therefore, in that form, it has nothing more to demand from them. Its demands of perfect obedience as the condition of eternal life, and of complete satisfaction for sin, have, by their Divine Surety, been fully answered for them. His surety-righteousness, received by faith, and imputed by God to them, is *their* righteousness for "the justification of life;" *their* complete answer to all the demands of the law, as a covenant of works. The consequence is, that though the law in that form, is not, with regard to them, abrogated; yet it is *fulfilled and satisfied;* and, being fully satisfied by them in their Surety and Representative, it will not, it cannot, oblige them in their own persons, to answer the same demands a second time. The holy and just law of God, will never exact from them, a *double* payment of the *same debt.* Thus true believers are, in their justification, "delivered" from the dominion and obligation of the law, as it is a covenant of works. And, as they are delivered from it, or dead to it, in that form; so it is dead to them. For, the Apostle not only compares it to a *dead husband*, to whom the surviving spouse is, by the law of marriage, no longer bound; but he says plainly, "*That being dead*, in which ye were held[p]. The law as a covenant is dead to believers, inasmuch as it will not, and cannot, exercise any commanding or condemning power over

[p] Rom. vii. 2, 6.

them. It can neither justify them for their personal obedience, nor condemn them for their disobedience [q]. 'True believers,' as our excellent Confession of Faith expresses it [r], are 'not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned.' On the ground of Christ's fulfilling of it, in their stead, they are delivered from all its demands, of personal and perfect obedience, and of punishment for sin, in order to justification before God.

In order to explain the meaning of what has now been said, as well as to pave the way for what is afterwards to be advanced, on this fundamental and important subject; it will be proper to remark, That, since Christ the second Adam performed perfectly all that, according to the covenant of works, was to have been done by man himself, to entitle him to life, and that, seeing all that he did and suffered, is imputed to sinners who believe, believers therefore *are justified* in the sight of God. They are in the very same state, with respect to righteousness entitling them to life, in which they should have been, had the first Adam fulfilled for himself and his posterity, the condition of life in the covenant of works. Accordingly we read that, "the just by faith," are entitled to the same life, to which, man, by his fulfilment of that condition, would have been entitled [s]. If Adam had continued to yield perfect obedience, until the time appointed for his trial had elapsed, he as the representative of his descendants, would have entered upon

[q] Rom. viii. 1, 3. [r] Confess. Chap. xix. art. 6.
[s] Hab. ii. 4. Rom. x. 5.

a state of confirmation in holiness and happiness, or in the begun possession of eternal life; and the covenant of works, as a contract fulfilled on his part, would henceforth have continued to be an everlasting security to him, for his own, and his posterity's, enjoyment of the eternal life promised him for himself and them. But, in his state of confirmation, the law as *a covenant*, could not have continued to be the rule of his obedience; because to subject him still to the law in its federal form, as the rule of his duty, would have been, to reduce him again to a state of *trial*, and to require him to work *over again*, for that life to which he was *already* entitled, by his having performed the condition of the covenant. At the same time, as man could, in no state whatever, be released from his obligation to obey his Creator, he must have had a rule of obedience. And, as the law as a covenant could not, for the reason now mentioned, have been a rule to him; it follows that, in his state of confirmation, the law of *nature*, divested of its covenant-form, or of its promise of life and threatening of death, would have been the immutable rule of his obedience, both in time and in eternity. As the first Adam, then, upon his having fulfilled the condition of the covenant of works, for himself and his posterity, would have been released from the obligation of the law in that form; so they, to whom, the righteousness of the second Adam, is imputed for the justification of life, are delivered from the law in its federal form, and, at the same time, they continue under it as the law of Christ, and as divested of that form.

The Lord Jesus, as the Representative and

Surety of elect sinners, condescended to subject himself, in their stead, to the moral law as a covenant of works, in order to redeem them from it in its *covenant-form.* The apostle Paul informs us that, " God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law [t]." From this passage it is plain, that Christ was made under the law, in that form in which, they whom he came to redeem, were under it. Now, as they were under it as a covenant of works, it was requisite, that he also should be made under it as a covenant of works; in order to answer for them, all its demands in that form, and so to redeem them from the bondage of it. Were any man to suppose or affirm, that Christ was made under the law, not as a covenant, but merely as *a rule;* according to such a supposition, the meaning of the passage cited above, would be this:—' God sent forth his Son, made under the law as a *rule*, to redeem them who were under the law as a rule, from the authority and obligation of it, and consequently from all obedience to it.'—Now would not this be the very soul of Antinomianism? Would it not be, to make the holy One of God, the minister of sin? Far be it from us, to suppose it possible for the holy, the inspired Apostle to teach such doctrine as that! —As it is chiefly the *moral* law, of which our Apostle is there speaking, his meaning then must be;—That the Son of God became subject to that law, *not*, as a rule of life to believers, but *only*, as a covenant of works, in order to redeem sinners from it in its covenant form.

[t] Gal. iv. 4, 5.

By the covenant of works, a twofold connection is established between sin and eternal death; one, between a *state* of sin, and eternal death, and another, between *thoughts*, *words*, and *acts* of sin, and eternal death. The former is indissoluble, and cannot but remain firm. A sinner cannot be in a *state* of unbelief and sin, without being, at the same time, under the dominion of spiritual death, and bound over by the curse of the violated law, to death eternal. Accordingly, such threatenings as these, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him[u];" and, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die[w];" do bind over, all unbelieving and impenitent sinners, continuing in their state of sin under the law as a covenant, to eternal death. The latter is dissolvable, and to all true believers, is actually dissolved. In the satisfaction given by Christ, and imputed to believers, the penalty of eternal death with regard to them, is already satisfied; and therefore the execution of it, can never be renewed on them. Their debt of satisfaction for sin, being already discharged, cannot be charged a second time[x]. The covenant-form of the law, or "the law of sin and death," is so dissolved to believers; that it can no longer, promise eternal life to them, for their personal obedience, nor threaten them with eternal death, for their disobedience. And indeed, how can it either threaten eternal death, or promise eternal life, to believers; who, in their justification, on the ground of the infinitely perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, im-

[u] John iii. 36. [w] Rom. viii. 13. [x] John v. 24.

puted to them, have already escaped eternal death, and have already, not only a complete title to life eternal, but a begun possession of it[y]? In the Oracles of truth, we are informed that, saints on earth are, upon their vital union with the second Adam, as *really* possessed of eternal life, as the saints in heaven are; and that, sinners who have no such union with him, are as *really* under the begun execution of the sentence of eternal death, as the damned in hell are, though in a far lower degree[z].

Believers are dead to the law as a covenant, relatively, and really.—They are dead to it *relatively*, or with respect to their *state* before the Lord. This is the happy, the inestimable, privilege of all who are instated in the covenant of grace, and justified before God. As the relation between husband and spouse, is dissolved by death[a]; so, the relation between the law as a covenant and believers, is, in the moment of their justification, dissolved[b]. The moment they become alive in the eye of the law, they become dead to the law. And as their justification is at once perfect, so is their deliverance from the law as a covenant. As the former admits of no higher and lower degrees, so neither does the latter. It is the peculiar privilege of them, who are in a state of union with Christ, and of justification in him, to be wholly delivered from the covenant of works. They "are not under the law, but under grace[c];" not under the law or covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace.—Believers are also dead to the law

[y] John iii. 16. Acts xiii. 39. Rom. vi. 14.
[z] John v. 24. and iii. 36.
[a] Rom. vii. 2.
[b] Rom. vii. 4.
[c] Rom. vi. 14.

as a covenant, *really*, or in respect of their *inclination* and *practice*. Though a legal temper remains in them, yet the dominion of it is taken away; and, therefore, they no longer *desire* to be under the law as a covenant; or to go about as formerly, "to establish their own righteousness," in the affair of justification; but they rely only on the righteousness of God their Saviour, for all their title to life eternal. At the same time, seeing that some degree of a legal spirit, or of an inclination of heart, to the way of the covenant of works, still remains in them, and often prevails against them; they sometimes find it exceedingly difficult for them, to resist that inclination to rely on their own attainments and performances, for some part of their title, to the favour and enjoyment of God. If, at any season, they be uncommonly frequent and lively, in their exercise of graces and performance of duties, they then especially, find it inexpressibly difficult to refrain from flattering themselves, that such exercises and duties entitle them, in *some* degree, either to the Saviour himself, or to the joy of his salvation. Indeed, they find nothing in their spiritual exercise more difficult, than so to mortify their legal temper, as to die to all hope from the law as a covenant. This death to the law, then, admits of degrees in believers, and it will not be perfect in any of them, so long as sin remains in them. They cannot, in their practice, become *perfectly* dead to the law, till they be perfectly dead to sin. Their *relative* death to the law of works, is perfect; but their *real* death to it, is imperfect. The former, is the dissolution of a relation: the latter is the gradual

extinction of a disposition. The one refers to their justification: the other, to their sanctification.

There are two errors, respecting the deliverance of believers from the law, which are equally contrary to the Oracles of truth. The one, is that of the Legalist, who maintains that, believers are still under the moral law as a covenant of works: the other, is that of the Antinomian, who affirms that, believers are not under it even as a rule of life. These errors are as contrary to the Scriptures of truth, as they are to each other; and they are equally subversive of that evangelical holiness, which is a principal part of eternal life, and which is so requisite, that without it, no man shall see the Lord [d]. The plain doctrine of Scripture, is this; That, while true believers are dead to, or delivered from, the law, as a law or covenant of works, they are under it, and account it their high privilege, to be under the infinite obligation of it, as a rule of life. Indeed, to be freed from the law in its federal form, is nothing more than, to be delivered from the covenant of works, and from an inclination to cleave to that covenant; and our affirming, according to the Scriptures, That believers are delivered from the law as a covenant of works, necessarily implies that, they are under the law, in some other respect. Accordingly, the apostle Paul informs us that, they "are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ [e];" that is, they are under the law of the ten commandments, as the law of Christ, or as the law in the hand of Christ the Mediator.

[d] Heb. xii. 14. [e] 1 Cor. ix. 21.

No man *can live to God*, in point of sanctification, till *after he become dead* to the law as a covenant, in justification: neither can he otherwise live to God, than by holy conformity of heart and of life, to the law as a rule of duty[f]. The death of legal hope in him, is *necessary* to a life of evangelical obedience.

Having premised these observations, in order to prevent mistakes, and to enable the candid reader to understand with more ease, that which is to follow; I shall now take a more particular view of the important subject, and consider, first, *What it is* in the law as a covenant of works, to which, believers are dead; secondly, *What is included* in their being dead to the law under that form; in the third place, The *means* of their having become dead to the law as a covenant; fourthly, The *consequence* of it; and lastly, The *necessity*.

SECT. I. *WHAT IT IS in the law as a covenant of works, to which believers are dead.*

IT is true believers and *they only*, who are become dead to the law as a covenant. All unbelievers are alive to it; they are under the dominion of it; and indeed they so cleave to it, as to *desire* to be under its dominion. They resolutely persist in relying on their own obedience to that law, for a title to justification and eternal life. On the contrary, all true believers, having been convinced of their utter inability, both to yield *perfect* obedience to the precept, as the condition of life, and to suffer the dreadful penalty of it, so as to give *full* satisfac-

[f] Gal. ii. 19.

tion to Divine justice, for their innumerable transgressions, receive the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, which not only satisfies, but magnifies the law; and so, they "become dead to the law by the body of Christ." Upon their union with the second Adam, and communion with Him in his righteousness, they are delivered, as has been observed above, both from the obligation of the law in its federal form, and from a reigning inclination of heart, to be under it in that form. Being already justified, and in their justification, wholly delivered from condemnation[g], they are no longer 'under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned.' They are set free from the *dominion* or *power* of it. There are *four* sorts of power belonging to the law as a covenant, from which, believers are delivered; namely, The *commanding* power, the *promising* or justifying power, the *condemning* power, and the *irritating* power of it.

1. Believers are, in the act of justification, set free from the *commanding power* of the law as a covenant of works. This will be evident, if we consider that, in case of transgression, the commanding and condemning power of the law as a covenant, are *inseparable*. By the condemning sentence of the law of that covenant, every transgressor of its commands, is bound over to eternal death. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them[h]." "Now we know that, what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are *under the law*[i];" as if the Apostle had said, 'What

[g] Rom. viii. 1. [h] Gal. iii. 10. [i] Rom. iii. 19.

things soever the law saith, especially in its condemning sentence, it saith to them who are under the commanding power of it. If believers, then, be still under the commanding power of the law as a broken covenant of works, they must also be still under its *condemning* power, and so be, every moment, bound over to eternal death; since, every moment, they come short of *perfect obedience* to its commands. But, they are *not* under the condemning power of the law as a covenant of works[k]; and therefore, they are *not* under the commanding power of the law in its covenant-form. Our Apostle does not say to the believers in Rome, 'Ye are become dead to the curse of the law merely;' but, —"Ye are become dead to the *law*:" "Ye are delivered from the *law*[l]," from the law itself, from that which is most essential to the law in its federal form. In another place, he addresses them thus: "Ye are not under the law, but under grace[m]." Neither does he say here, 'Ye are not under the condemning sentence or curse of the law;' but,— "Ye are not under the *law*." The style of the Apostle on this topic, is remarkable. Of Christ he says, "He *was* made under the law[n]." To believers in union with Christ, he says, "Ye are *not* under the law." This plainly evinces that, they are not under it as a covenant, in the sense in which He was under it. But he was under its *commanding* power as a covenant, as well as under its condemning power: considered as the Surety

[k] Gal. iii. 13. Rom. viii. 1.
[l] Rom. vii. 4, 6.
[m] Rom. vi. 14.
[n] Gal. iv. 4.

of elect sinners, he was as much bound, to perform perfect obedience to its precept, as to suffer the full execution of its penalty [o]. Therefore, believers are not under the commanding power of it as a covenant of works. Justified, on the ground of that consummate righteousness, which Christ in their stead fulfilled, in answer to its demands of perfect obedience and full satisfaction for sin, they are delivered, as much from the commanding, as from the condemning, power of it. He discharged their debt of perfect obedience to the precept, for eternal life, as fully, as he did, their debt of infinite satisfaction to the penalty, of the law of works.

The precept, requiring *perfect obedience as the condition of life*, is the *principal* part of the law or covenant of works. "Do this and thou shalt live." "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." It is to this precept, requiring perfect and personal obedience as the *condition of life*, and requiring it, on *pain of eternal death* for the smallest failure, that believers are dead. The reader, I hope, will not mistake me: I do not say, that believers are delivered from the precepts of the law *simply;* but only that they are set free from them in their *federal* form. The precept to perform perfect obedience simply, is *not* the command of the covenant of works. Man was bound to perfect obedience, previous to the covenant of works, and would have been obliged to perform it, though such a covenant had never been made with him: for it is *essential* to the Divine law, to be a *rule* of human

[o] Matth. iii. 15. Heb. x. 9.

obedience; but not, to be a covenant of works[oo]. But the command to perform *perfect* obedience as *the condition of life*, is the form of that covenant. Now it is from the command *only in this form*, that believers are set free. And the ground of their deliverance, from the precept of the law in its federal form, or, from the rigorous demand of perfect obedience as the condition of life, is *the perfect obedience* of their Divine Surety to it, in their stead. This is the proper condition of life to all his spiritual seed. "By the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "By the obedience of One, shall many be made righteous[p]." The obligation to *Do*, or to obey the law, is eternally binding on all believers; but, from the obligation to *Do and live*, to do, in order to procure a title to eternal life, they are delivered. They are under immutable and eternal obligations, to yield perfect obedience to the law of the ten commandments, as a *rule* of life; but they

[oo] The reader is here requested to observe, That, although the law and its commands, as a covenant and a rule, are *formally* different, yet they are *materially* the same. Though the true believer, therefore, is, in his justification, delivered from them in their federal form, or under the form of a covenant of works; yet he still is, and cannot but be, under the whole original authority and obligation of them, as his rule of duty. He continues to be firmly bound, as will afterwards be explained, by the precepts of the law as a rule of life, to personal and perfect obedience, not only in time but even to all eternity. His obligation to perfect and perpetual obedience, instead of being in the smallest degree relaxed, by his having been delivered from them in their federal form, is thereby increased and confirmed.

[p] Rom. v. 18, 19.

are delivered from the obligation, and in a great measure from the desire, to yield, in their own persons, perfect obedience to it as a *covenant* of life. Eternal life is, by the perfect obedience of their adorable Surety, already merited for them; and therefore, though they are under every obligation to obey *from* life, they are under no obligation to obey *for* life[q]. Nay, to attempt obedience, in order to procure a title to eternal life, especially after they have been already, by the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to them, perfectly entitled to it, would, instead of being their duty, be their aggravated sin[r].

2. Believers are also set free from *the promising, or justifying, power* of the law as a covenant of works. The promise of the covenant of works, is, a promise of eternal life, on condition of personal and perfect obedience to the law in its covenant form. Now, since believers are released from their obligation to yield perfect obedience *for* life, as required in that covenant, they are no more to expect eternal life, as promised in it. They hold all their title to life eternal, in the second Adam their blessed Surety. In Him, they have that perfect righteousness, to which, eternal life is promised; and which is the only foundation of their sure title to it. Their own sincere obedience is not the legal ground of their title to life; and therefore it has

[q] The famous Dr OWEN was not afraid to say, 'That *the whole power* and sanction of the first covenant, was conferred upon Christ, and in him, fulfilled and ended.'

[r] Gal. v. 4.

not the legal promise of life. Their evangelical obedience, as it is an evidence of their union with the last Adam, and communion with him in his righteousness, has, indeed, a promise of the covenant of grace, connecting eternal life with it[s]. But, of the promise of eternal life in the covenant of works, which makes a man's own obedience, the ground of his right to justification and eternal life, the law to believers, is wholly divested. The law as a covenant, makes no promise of life, but to the man, who performs *personal* and *perfect* obedience. But to believers, this rigour of the law in that form, is relaxed: a responsible Surety is admitted, and allowed to take their place in law; to whose perfect and meritorious righteousness imputed to them, eternal life is promised. Believing then in the Lord Jesus, they have eternal life, not according to the promise of the first covenant, but according to that of the second[t].

3. Believers are, in their justification, delivered likewise, from *the condemning power* of the law as a covenant. The law in its federal form, condemns every sinner who is under it, to death in all its dreadful extent. Death spiritual, temporal, and eternal, is the awful penalty of the law in that form. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die[u]." "The wages of sin is death[w]." But as the law is so divested of its promise of life to believers, that it cannot justify them for their obedience; so, it is denuded of its threatening of death to them, and it cannot condemn them for their

[s] Rom. ii. 7. 1 Tim. iv. 8.
[t] Tit i. 2. Rom. v. 21.
[u] Gen. ii. 17.
[w] Rom. vi. 23.

disobedience. In consequence of communion with Christ in his righteousness, by which, the law's demand of infinite satisfaction for sin, is completely answered, they are dead to it as a covenant of works, and it is dead to them. It has no more power, to frown upon them or condemn them, than a dead husband has, to frown on his deceased spouse. Hence are these cheering passages of Scripture; "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us[x]." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation[y]." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit[z]." When a man is justified in the sight of God, all his sins, past, present, and future, are together and at once pardoned. The guilt of eternal wrath, for his past, and present iniquities, is actually and *formally* removed. The obligation under which he was lying, to suffer eternal punishment, for those transgressions, is completely dissolved. And the guilt of eternal wrath for sins to come, is, in the act of his justification, effectually prevented from recurring upon him. For, although this pardon of sins yet to come, is not a *formal* remission of these sins, but merely a not imputing of them; yet, it effectually secures the believer, from ever coming into, or falling under, condemnation[a]. This distinction, between the formal remission of sins past, and present, and the not imputing of sins to come,

[x] Gal. iii. 13.
[y] John v. 24.
[z] Rom. viii. 1.
[a] John v. 24.

is clearly marked in the Oracles of truth [b]. Thus, in their justification, true believers are fully, and for ever, set free from the condemning sentence or curse of the law, as a broken covenant [c] For, as in legal estimation, they sinned, and fell under the condemning sentence of the law as a covenant, in the first Adam; so, they endured the execution of that sentence, and thereby satisfied Divine justice, in the second Adam [d].

4 Lastly, Believers are, in consequence of their justification, set free from *the irritating power* of the law as a covenant. While the commanding, promising, and condemning power of the law in its federal form, are *essential* to it in that form, the irritating power of it, is only *accidental.* It is occasional or accidental merely, that motions of sins are by the law. When a man, under the covenant of works and the dominion of sin, obtains a transient view of the purity, spirituality, and strictness of the law, and at the same time, of his innumerable and aggravated transgressions of it, with the tremendous wrath to which they have exposed him; this not only fills his mind with disquieting dread of hell, but inflames the corruptions of his heart, and makes them rage vehemently against the holy law. The evil passions of his depraved nature, irritated by the purity of the precepts, and the severity of the curses, of the law as a covenant, urge him the more violently, to the commission of that which it prohibits. The law, strictly forbidding all motions of sin in his heart, and that, without affording him

[b] Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. Rom. iv. 7, 8.
[c] Confess. Chap. xx. sect. 1. [d] Gal. ii. 20. Eph. ii. 6.

the smallest degree of strength to resist them, irritates, provokes, and so renders them the more fierce and intractable. Accordingly, the apostle Paul says of himself and of the believers in Rome, in their unregenerate state, "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death [e]." And of himself in particular he says, "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence [f]." This is not to be imputed as a fault to the holy law, but is wholly to be charged to the reigning depravity of the sinner's nature. For, although the law never *gives* the sinner any just occasion of committing sin; yet, the inveterate corruption of his nature, *takes* occasion from the holy strictness of its precepts, and the awful severity of its threatenings, to rise in violent opposition to it, and to work in him, all manner of sinful desire to that which is forbidden in it, and *because* it is forbidden. Like a mighty torrent, which rises, rages, and overflows, the more that means are employed to stop its current; the reigning depravity of the heart, rising in rebellion against the holy commandment, bursts forth with the greater impetuosity, and irresistibly employs all the faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body, "as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin [g]." Now, believers are graciously delivered, from this irritating power of the law as a broken covenant. Trusting in the Lord Jesus for complete salvation, relying on his meritorious righteousness for all their

[e] Rom. vii. 5. [f] Rom. vii. 8. [g] Rom. vi. 13.

title to life eternal, constrained by his redeeming love, and enabled by his sanctifying Spirit, to mortify their depravity, and to perform spiritual obedience; they "delight in the law" as a rule of duty, and "serve God in newness of spirit[h]."

Thus it is plain that, true believers are dead to the commanding, the promising, the condemning, and the irritating, power of the law as a covenant of works.

SECT. II. *WHAT the believer's being dead to the law as a covenant,* INCLUDES.

IT is the inestimable privilege, as well as the indispensable duty, of all who have believed through grace, to be "dead to the law" as a covenant of works. To be dead to it *relatively*, or with respect to their state, is their exalted privilege; and to become dead to it *really*, in the disposition of their minds, is their bounden duty. The latter, is both a consequence and an evidence of the former. Now to be dead to the law in its federal form, comprises especially the following particulars:

1. Their *despairing of salvation* by the works of the law. In death there is no hope; but "to him who is joined to all the living, there is hope[i]." They who are alive to the law as a covenant, have hope from the law, and from their own works of

[h] Rom. vii. 6.—It is not here insinuated, that believers are, in this world, *perfectly* set free from the irritating power of the law. As, in their practice, they are only dying to it as a covenant; so, in proportion to the degree of the legal temper that remains in them, they may on many occasions, be exposed to its irritating power.

[i] Eccles. ix. 4.

obedience to the law. They presume to hope, that God will justify and save them, because they intend well, and do well; because they are just in their dealings, and diligent in their duties; or, because they wrong no man, and endeavour to perform as many good works, as, consistently with human infirmity, they can. Thus, they "go about to establish their own righteousness," as the foundation of their hope; and "touching the righteousness which is in the law," they fancy that "they are blameless[k]." And though they *say*, that without Christ, they cannot be saved, yet their hope of salvation, is founded on their own obedience to the law. On the contrary, they who are justified by the faith of Christ, and are dead to the law, have no expectation from the law; no hope of justification or title to life, by the works of the law. They see plainly, that no righteousness can secure them from eternal death, and entitle them to eternal life, but one which is in all respects perfect.

2. Believers' being dead to the law, includes *an entire dissolution of the relation*, between them and the law as a covenant. In death, the relations between husband and wife, master and servant, are dissolved. "The servant is free from his master[l]." In like manner, when they who are justified by faith are dead to the law, the former relation between them and it, is dissolved. So long as they were alive to the law as a covenant, that relation stood firm; they were "debtors to do the whole law[m]:" they were bound to give infinite satisfaction for their sins, and to yield perfect and perpetual obe-

[k] Philip. iii. 6. [l] Job iii. 19. [m] Gal. v. 3.

dience as the condition of life. But now that they have, in the hand of faith, presented to the law, the perfect and infinitely meritorious, righteousness of their Divine Surety, which answers fully all its demands upon them; they are honourably, as well as legally, acquitted from their obligation, to suffer for satisfaction to Divine justice, and to yield perfect obedience for a right to eternal life. They are, indeed, obliged still to obey the holy law of God; but not to obey it as a covenant of works, not to obey it, in order to procure a title to justification and eternal life. They are now divorced from the law as a covenant, their first husband, and "are married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." They are dead to the law in that form, and the law is dead to them; so that their relation to it as a covenant, is entirely dissolved. The redeemed of the Lord, therefore, should no more expect eternal life for their own works, than a widow should hope for favours and comforts, from a dead husband. They are no more exposed to the curses of the broken law, than a widow is, to the threats of a husband who is lying in the grave. For, inasmuch as deliverance from a covenant, is the dissolution of a relation which does *not admit of degrees;* they, in respect of their *state* before the Lord, are perfectly or wholly, set free from the covenant of works.

3. The death of believers to the law, comprises also their *deliverance from anxious concern or care,* about the *works of the law* in the affair of justification. "There is no work," says Solomon, "nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave

whither thou goest[n]." In death, there is no concern, nor solicitude, about performing any work. A dead body in the grave, is nowise careful to do any of the works, in which it was employed when alive. So they, who are dead to the law as a covenant of works, though they are careful to maintain *good* works, yet, have no care about the works of the law, in the affair of justification. They work, but they do not, as formerly, work for life. While they were alive to the law, all their concern was, "to establish their own righteousness," and to rely on it for the justification of life; but now that they are dead to the law, they no longer, have any allowed solicitude of that kind.

4. Lastly, In their becoming dead to the law as a covenant, believers *enter into rest.* When a man dies, "he rests from his labours." There is no labour, no wearisome toil, in the grave. "There the weary are at rest[o]." They who are alive to the law, "are wearied in the greatness of their way[p]." The law as a covenant, appoints them a wearisome task. It requires from them, perfect and continual obedience as the condition of life, and that, without affording them, the smallest degree of strength to perform it; and it loads them with direful and overwhelming curses, if the task be not performed. The consequence is, that, in going about to establish their own righteousness, they "are weary and heavy laden." But when a sinner, in compliance with the call of the gospel, comes, wearied and heavy laden as he is, to the

[n] Eccles. ix. 10. [o] Job iii. 17. [p] Isa. lvii. 10.

Lord Jesus, He gives him rest[q]. Having thus "become dead to the law by the body of Christ," the weary is at rest. He attains rest to his conscience, in the righteousness of Christ: "For He is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth[r]." He also obtains rest to his affections, in the fulness of Christ, and in God as his God and portion. In proportion as his legal spirit is mortified, he rests from his legal and slavish fear of that wrath, which is threatened in the law. He is at rest also from those legal cares and sorrows, which attended his self-righteous and laborious efforts. He rests from his legal desires and delights. Formerly, he desired to be under the law as a covenant; and "he sought righteousness as it were by the works of the law." He delighted too in his own righteousness, and in the hope of justification on the ground of it. But now, that he is become dead to the law, he ceases from these desires and delights. He no more delights in himself, nor in his legal performances; for he now sees that, all such "righteousnesses are as filthy rags[s]." Nay, though, instead of being so polluted and so defective, as they are, they were even perfect; yet, he now takes no pleasure in justification by the works of the law as a covenant[t]. On the contrary, beholding the incomparable excellence, of the way of justification and salvation in the covenant of grace, he desires above all things "to be found in Christ Jesus, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ;"

[q] Matth. xi. 28.
[r] Rom. x. 4.
[s] Isa. lxiv. 6.
[t] Job ix. 15, 21.

that he "may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings[u]."

Sect. III. *Of the means of becoming dead to the law as a covenant of works.*

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, Chapter ii. 19. says of himself, "I *through the law*, am dead to the law." The means, then, of becoming dead to the law as a covenant, is the law itself. This, at first view, may seem a very strange, and unlikely, means of attaining such a purpose: but, upon due attention to the subject, it will be found that, no means are, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, so well adapted to divorce a sinner from the law in its federal form, as the law itself. The law indeed is not the *cause*, but it is the *occasion*, of a man's becoming dead to it as a covenant: for it accuses, condemns, and terrifies, the awakened sinner; and so, it urges him to flee speedily for refuge to Jesus Christ who is the *real cause* of one's becoming dead to the law. "The law was our school-master," says the Apostle, "to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith[w]." To bring a sinner to Christ, is no proper effect of the law, but yet it is occasioned by the law; inasmuch as the law forces him away from itself, and leaves him no ground of hope, that he shall ever be justified by his own obedience to it. The law, by the strictness of its precepts, and the severity and terror of its threatenings, is an occasion to him, of seeking righteousness and eternal life, where they are to be found. To be dead then to the law, *through* the

[u] Philip. iii. 9, 10. [w] Gal. iii. 24.

law, is, by means of the strictness and rigour of the law, or, of a work of legal conviction and humiliation, to be driven to Christ for justification by faith, "without the works of the law."

When the Holy Spirit, sets the law home to the conscience of a sinner, the following effects of the work of the law, *are means* of his becoming dead to it as a covenant of works:

1. Through the law as a covenant, an awakened sinner attains discoveries of *the infinite holiness, justice, and majesty* of the Lord. Since the law is not only a declaration of the will of God, but a transcript of his moral image; no sooner is the understanding of a sinner enlightened, than in the glass of the law, and by the light of the Spirit, he begins to discern the spotless *holiness* of God. He perceives, in God's forbiding the smallest degree of sin, and requiring the highest degree of every duty, and that on pain of the most tremendous punishment, that he hateth sin and loveth holiness in an infinite degree; and therefore, that his nature and will, are infinitely and immutably holy. In the glass of the law, the sinner discerns also, the inflexible *justice* of the Divine nature. He sees that, in requiring perfect conformity of heart and life, to his righteous law, the Lord requires nothing but what every rational creature owes him; and that, in threatening death in all its dreadful extent and duration, for the very smallest sin, he threatens nothing but what is justly due to the sinner. Perceiving that, God requires nothing but what is just and reasonable, and that, he prohibits nothing but what is unjust and unreasonable, the sinner now sees that, the strictest equity is displayed in all the

precepts of the law. Discerning, at the same time, that every sin, committed against the *infinite* Majesty of heaven, justly deserves *infinite* punishment, he sees that, the highest justice appears also in the penalty of the law. Through the law, he discerns likewise, the glorious *majesty* of the Lord. The law of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, is a royal law. The greatness and dignity of it deserve, that it should be honoured with perfect and perpetual obedience. It is clothed with majesty; it binds the conscience; it demands the obedience of the heart, as well as of the life; and it must be universally, as well as perfectly obeyed. Through the law, then, the awakened sinner discerns, not only the holiness and righteousness, but the majesty, of the sovereign Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy [x]. When therefore the commandment, clothed especially with the majesty of the Lord, comes into his conscience, sin will revive; self-confidence and legal hope will die [y]. When he hears the great and terrible God himself, speaking to him in his law, he will be constrained to cry, "Enter not into judgment with me; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified [z]."

2. By means of the law, in the hand of the Spirit, a sinner is made to discern, *the Divine authority and majesty* of the law itself. Under a convincing work of the Holy Spirit, he begins to consider the law in its federal form, as the law of Jehovah; as the ordinance of the one Lawgiver, who is the uncreated fountain of authority, and the sovereign Judge of angels and of men. Regarding it

[x] James iv. 12. [y] Rom. vii. 9. [z] Psal. cxliii. 2.

as the law of the infinite Majesty of heaven, he, in the light of the Spirit, begins to see that it bears immutable impressions, not only of truth and rectitude, but of Divine authority, and supreme majesty. Beholding the face of Jehovah in his righteous law, and conscious that his provocations of Him, are innumerable, the sinner cannot but be struck with remorse and dread. When he hears the most High God, speaking to him in his fiery law, he will be ready to exclaim, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities; O Lord, who shall stand[a]?" Thus, the Divine authority and majesty of the law, coming into the conscience, destroy all expectation of life, by the works of the Law.

3. Through the law, an awakened sinner discerns also, the *holiness*, *spirituality*, *vast extent*, *and perfection*, of the law itself in its covenant-form. The Holy Spirit opens the eyes of his understanding, to see the strict conformity of the commandment, to the *holy* nature and will of God. The apostle Paul, speaking of himself as unregenerate, says, in a passage quoted above, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died[b]:" as if he had said, 'Touching the righteousness which is in the law, I was blameless: I imagined that I was sufficiently holy and righteous. But, when I began to discern the spotless holiness of the Divine law, sin revived, and I died: I then was convinced, that I was a sinner indeed; and so I died to all hope of justification, and of eternal life, by my own obedience to the law.' By the same means,

[a] Psal. cxxx. 3. [b] Rom. vii. 9.

the sinner discerns, not only the holiness, but the *spirituality* of the law. "We know," says the Apostle, "that the law is spiritual [c]." No sooner are the eyes of a man's understanding opened, than he sees that, the law is the authoritative and binding rule of all the dispositions, thoughts, and motions of his heart, as well as of all the words, and actions of his life. When he begins, under the convincing influences of the Holy Spirit, to understand the meaning, and to feel the power, especially of this command, "Thou shalt not covet [d];" his hope of life by his own righteousness, perishes. He now sees that, every Divine precept requires spiritual obedience, the service of the whole heart, as well as of the whole life. He discerns also the great extent of the holy law. "Thy commandment," says the Psalmist, "is exceeding broad [e]." When he sees, that the commandment extends to all his inclinations, affections, and designs, and to all his thoughts, words, and actions; he begins to be convinced, that he has no righteousness, answerable to the requirements of the holy law. No sooner, is his awakened conscience, informed of the breadth and length of the righteousness required in the law, than he is convinced that, his own righteousness "is a bed shorter, than that he can stretch himself on it, and a covering narrower, than that he can wrap himself in it [f]." Thus, through his discovery of the vast extent of the law as a covenant, sin revives in his conscience, and he dies to all hope of justification by his own righte-

[c] Rom. vii 14.
[d] Rom. vii. 7.
[e] Psal. cxix. 96.
[f] Isa. xxviii. 20.

ousness. Moreover, "The law of the Lord is *perfect*[g]." It requires, on pain of eternal death, perfect and unceasing obedience, as the condition of eternal life. So absolutely perfect, indeed, is this holy law, that the man "who offends but in one point, is guilty of all[h]." To disobey any one command, though in a single instance, is an insult offered to the Divine authority of the *whole* law. When a man, then, is convinced, that he has, in innumerable instances, presumed to transgress this righteous and perfect law; he cannot but acknowledge himself to be so guilty before God, as to be justly condemned by the violated law, to eternal death: and when that conviction is not counterfeit, but true, he cannot but renounce all confidence in his own righteousness, for a right to eternal life, and so, "become dead to the law."

4. By means of the law as a covenant, a sinner attains *the knowledge of sin.* "By the law is the knowledge of sin[i]." In proportion as a man is truly convinced of sin, or is conscious of his having transgressed the Divine law, he discerns not only the reality, but the malignity and hatefulness of his sin. He sees that, whilst it is a transgression of the law of God, it is directly opposite to the holy nature and will of God. "Sin now appears sin, and, by the commandment, becomes in his view exceeding sinful[k]." By the commandment, the Holy Spirit convinces him, that his nature is not only destitute of original righteousness, but is wholly corrupted; that this corruption of his whole

[g] Psal. xix. 7.
[h] James ii. 10.
[i] Rom iii. 20.
[k] Rom. vii. 13.

nature, is not merely the consequence and evidence of his having been guilty of Adam's first sin, but, is the source of all the innumerable transgressions of his life; that he is under the dominion or *power* of sin; and that the law, instead of having the smallest tendency to rescue him from the power of sin, is *itself* "*the strength of sin*[1]." Now, when he is enabled thus to discern the nature, and the dominion, of the sin that dwelleth in him, he becomes dead to all hope of eternal life, by the works of the law.

5. Through the law, he likewise attains alarming discoveries of *that tremendous wrath*, which is revealed from heaven against him, for his innumerable transgressions. Convinced of sin by the law, the sinner is made to see that, by the curse of the broken law, he is bound over to suffer eternal punishment. As by the precept of the law in its federal form, he is convinced of the evil *nature* of sin, and of its desert of punishment; so, by the penalty of the law, he attains the knowledge of the dreadful *consequences* of sin. The law, under the convincing influences of the Holy Spirit, shews him plainly, that the fiery indignation, the intolerable, overwhelming, and endless, wrath of the great and terrible God, is the sure, the direful, consequence of his transgression. This "wrath of God is revealed from heaven" to him, not in groundless alarms of approaching danger, but in threatenings as certain, as they are terrible. Now, when the convinced sinner thus begins to see that, "the wages of his sin is death," and that, he in particu-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 56.

lar, is justly condemned to endure the fierceness of Jehovah's wrath, the fury of his almighty indignation, not for an age, or millions of ages, but for ever and ever; his hope of salvation by the works of the law, will perish. He now sees clearly, That the penalty of the violated law, is not to be satisfied by doing, but by suffering. Thus, his conviction of guilt and wrath, by the threatenings of the law, tends to destroy his confidence in his own righteousness, and so, to render him dead to the law. For he cannot now but see and feel, that he is imprisoned or "concluded under sin[m];" and, that none can "say to such a prisoner, Go forth," but He, whom God "hath given for a covenant of the people[n]." "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," he is now convinced that, his own righteousness is but a refuge of lies, which the hail shall sweep away.

6. By the instrumentality of the law as a covenant, a man is at the same time convinced, that it would be *just* in God to punish him, for the very least of his transgressions, *with everlasting destruction.* He is made to know, that sin, as it is committed against the infinitely great Jehovah, deserves an infinite punishment, even the everlasting perdition of the sinner. Convinced of the malignity and demerit of sin by the law, he is satisfied that, God could do him no manner of injury, though he should consign him to the place of torment, and there punish him, with all the severity of almighty vengeance. He sees that, infinite justice could not be glorified, nor the credit of it

[m] Gal. iii. 22. [n] Isa. xlix. 8, 9.

maintained, unless infinite punishment were inflicted, either upon himself, or upon a responsible Surety in his stead, for the infinite offence given to it, by his transgression. He is persuaded that, the Lord is righteous in executing vengeance, adequate to the infinite evil of presuming to sin against his infinitely glorious majesty. Accordingly the apostle Paul says, "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world[o]?" The sinner now sees, in the glass of the law, that it is highly proper and even necessary, that Divine justice should be honoured by a complete satisfaction. And indeed, if he did not see damnation to be *just*, he could not discern salvation to be *free*. But discerning, as he now does, the equity and righteousness of God, in the infliction even of eternal punishment upon him for sin; he is well pleased with the doctrine and the offer of a free salvation, through the infinite satisfaction, given to Divine justice by Jesus Christ, and is content, that the justice of God should receive a satisfaction far more complete, than he himself could give, though he should suffer, in the place of torment, through all eternity. And so, "he becomes dead to the law" as a covenant, "by the body of Christ."

7. Finally, By means of the law, a man is convinced of his *great need of the righteousness of Jesus Christ*, offered to him in the gospel. Contemplating, in the glass of the law, and by the light of the Spirit, his sinfulness and his misery; dreading the wrath of God, which he has provoked

[o] Rom. iii. 5, 6.

by his great transgressions; convinced of the equity of God, though he should punish him with everlasting destruction; and despairing of deliverance, by his own "righteousness and strength;" he perceives his extreme need of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, to answer for him, the high demands of the law as a covenant. Whilst he discerns by the gospel, the suitableness and sufficiency of that consummate righteousness, for his justification; he discovers by the law, his absolute need of it for that purpose. He sees plainly in the glass of the law, that he must inevitably and eternally perish, without communion with Christ in his righteousness. The consequence is, that, under the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit, he is disposed, to be an eternal debtor to the glorious righteousness of the last Adam, for all his security from eternal death, and all his right to eternal life. The righteousness, which the law as a covenant demanded from Christ, the Representative and Surety of elect sinners, is not only a glass, in which, the sinner sees that righteousness which he must fulfil, if he would enter into life on the ground of his own obedience; but, in the gospel, it is offered to him as a lost sinner, that by receiving the gift of it, "the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in him [p]." And no sooner, does he receive the gift of that spotless righteousness, than it is imputed to him for justification; and so he, who is unrighteous in himself, becomes "the righteousness of God in Christ [q]." Thus he becomes dead

[p] Rom. viii. 4. [q] 2 Cor. v. 21.

to the law of works, not only in point of *legal hope*, but in respect to his *state* before God.

SECT. IV. *Of the* IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCE, *of a believer's being dead to the law as a covenant of works.*

THE consequence or fruit, of a believer's having become dead to the law as a covenant, is by the apostle Paul, expressed thus : " Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God [r]." Here, our Apostle informs the believers in Rome, and all believers to the end of time, That they are become dead to the law as a covenant of works ; so that, it can neither justify them, nor condemn them ; and that they are dead to it by the body of Christ, that is, by the service and suffering of the body, or human nature of Christ [s]. As the obedience and suffering of Christ in human nature, which have answered all the demands of the law as a covenant, are imputed to them for their justification ; so the law in *that form*, being thereby satisfied with respect to them, has nothing more to demand of them, for a title to life. They are become dead to the law ; and so, in its federal form, it has no more dominion, over them, than the civil law has, over a man after he is dead. The design, according to our Apostle, of believers' being dead to the law, is, " That they should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead."

[r] Rom. vii. 4. [s] Heb. x. 5.

So long as the law their first husband, continued to have dominion over them, they could not justly, nor honourably, be married to another: but, when that husband is dead to them, or when they are set free from the dominion of the law as a covenant; they are at liberty to be honourably espoused to another, even to him who is raised from the dead. The Lord Jesus, having been "raised from the dead, dieth no more." He continues always, to be a living husband to his saints. And therefore, as they can never be loosed from the bond of their union with Christ, so they shall never be released from the law of this husband. Although, then, they are set free from the obligation of the law as a covenant of works; yet they "are under the law to Christ;" under the law as a rule of duty in the hand of Christ; under obligation to yield even perfect obedience to it; and they shall never be released from that obligation. Now the main design, of their deliverance from their first husband, and of their conjugal relation to Christ, is, as our Apostle expresses it, "That they may bring forth fruit unto God." It is not, that they may be left at liberty, to live as they please "without law to God;" but that, by union and communion with Christ, their Head of spiritual influences, they may bring forth "fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God[t]." As Children begotten and born in marriage, are legitimate, and all before marriage, are illegitimate; so those works only, which are the fruits of union with Christ, and

[t] Philip. i, 11.

which are performed in faith, and to the glory of God, are genuine fruits of righteousness; whereas, all that are done before union with Christ, are spurious. According to our Apostle, then, the certain consequence of believers' being dead to the law as a covenant, and of their being united to Christ, is, "that they bring forth fruit unto God." As long as sinners are alive to the law as a covenant, which is "the ministration of death," "they bring forth fruit unto death[u];" but no sooner are they dead to the law, and united to Him who is raised from the dead, than "they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life[w]."

In another passage, our Apostle expresses the consequence of being dead to the law, thus: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter[x]." Here the Apostle affirms that, believers are *delivered* from the law, not indeed as a rule of duty, but only as a covenant of works; that, they who hitherto were held fast under subjection to it as their first husband, are delivered from it, because it is dead to them: "*That being dead* wherein we were held." Although, in their unregenerate state, they were held fast under the dominion and obligation of it, as a woman who has a husband, is "held by the law of her husband;" yet, now that is dead to them, they are delivered or discharged from it, as a widow is, from the bond of marriage to her dead husband. They are delivered from the rigorous exaction, the dreadful

[u] Rom. vii. 5. [w] Rom. vi. 22. [x] Rom. vii. 6.

curse, and the irritating power of it. But for what purpose, are believers delivered from the law as a covenant? They "are delivered," says our Apostle, not, in order that they may live a loose or licentious life; but, "That they may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." To serve in newness of spirit, is, in consequence of their standing in a conjugal relation to Jesus Christ, and under a new and better covenant, to serve the Lord their God, "without slavish fear, in holiness and righteousness before him;" to serve him, under the renewing influences of his Holy Spirit, the Former of the new creature in their souls; to serve him, from a new heart and a new spirit, from new principles and motives, to new ends, and by walking in newness of life. It is, to serve him in a new manner, with filial confidence in him, with reverence and godly fear, with freedom and delight, as persons renewed in the spirit of their minds, and with their minds to serve his law, by yielding unfeigned and unreserved obedience to it, as the only rule of their duty. Believers are also delivered from the law as a covenant, that they may "serve not in the oldness of the letter;" not with an old covenant-spirit; nor in a mere outward observance of the law as a rule of life; and not in a bare external compliance with some, to the neglect of others, of its injunctions. "The letter killeth" by its bondage and terror: but they are set free from it, in order that they may serve the Lord, not only without servile fear, but "in spirit and in truth." The consequence or fruit, then, of being delivered from the law as a covenant of works, is, That believers become capable of

"serving God, in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Our Apostle, in another place, expresses the consequence and fruit of having become dead to the law in its federal form, in these very remarkable words:—"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God[y]." According to these words of the inspired Apostle, a believer's living unto God, is the native consequence and fruit, of his being dead to the law as a covenant of works. As long as a man continues alive to the law, he is dead to God; but when he becomes dead to the law in point of justification, he begins to live unto God in respect of sanctification. The death of his legal hope, is, in order to his life of evangelical obedience. His becoming dead to the law, issues in his living unto God; in his living a new, a spiritual, a holy life, and that "to the glory and praise of God." If he did not become dead to the law as a covenant, he could not live to God, in conformity to the law as a rule. His living unto God, then, is the necessary fruit, the sure consequence, of his having become dead to the law in its covenant-form.

The life which the true Christian lives, in consequence of his having become dead to the law, is not a life, either of perfect, or of imperfect, conformity to the law as a covenant of works[z]; but it is a *spiritual life*, the life of a spiritual man, in conformity to the law as a rule. It is the result of the inhabitation, and gracious operation, of the Holy

[y] Gal. ii. 19. [z] Rom. v. 6. and ix. 31, 32.

Spirit in his soul[a]. It is called in Scripture, "the life of God[b];" for it "is hid with Christ in God[c]." God liveth in himself, and the believer lives in union and communion with Him. It is wholly in and of God, and is a living in favour and fellowship with him. Our Apostle styles it, "a living by the faith of the Son of God;" and he says of himself, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me[d]." Christ is the purchaser, the bestower, the restorer, and the preserver, of the believer's life. Christ is the principle of his life, from whom; the pattern of his life, according to whom; and the end of it, to whom, he lives. Indeed Christ the living Redeemer, the resurrection and the life, is ALL in his spiritual life. "To me to live," says the Apostle, "is Christ[e]." It is also styled, A living and a walking in the Spirit[f]; a living in the strength of the Spirit as a Spirit of life[g]; under the guidance of the Spirit[h]; in the liberty of the Spirit[i]; in the comforts of the Spirit[k]; and in the fruits of the Spirit[l].

Living unto God, as the consequence of being dead to the law in its covenant-form, is moreover styled, A holy, a humble, and a heavenly life. It is called a "conversation, such as becometh the gospel of Christ[m];" "a walking circumspectly[n];" and "a living soberly, righteously, and godly[o]." It includes the love and practice of all those duties,

[a] Ezek. xxxvi. 27.
[b] Eph. iv. 18.
[c] Col. iii. 3.
[d] Gal. ii. 20.
[e] Philip. i. 21.
[f] Gal. v. 25.
[g] Rom. viii. 2.
[h] Rom. viii. 14.
[i] 2 Cor. iii. 17.
[k] Acts ix. 31.
[l] Gal. v. 22, 23.
[m] Philip. i. 27.
[n] Eph. v. 15.
[o] Tit. ii. 12.

of piety toward God, of sobriety with respect to himself, and of righteousness toward his neighbour, which, the believer is commanded in the law as his rule of duty, to perform; and which, he is bound to perform, under the influences of the Spirit of grace, from the principles and motives, according to the rules and patterns, and to the ends exhibited in the word of grace.—To live unto God, that unspeakably important consequence of having become dead to the law of works, comprises more particularly,

1. The believer's living suitably to the endearing *relations*, in which, God in Christ as his covenant-God, stands to him. It is his living to God, as his Father, his Redeemer, his Head and Husband, as his Judge, Lawgiver, and Sovereign, as his Portion, and as the Object of his supreme love, of his high admiration, and of his holy adoration.

2. It includes his living suitably to the inestimable *blessings* of salvation, which he has received from God. Hath God enlightened the minds of his people, in the saving knowledge of himself and of Christ? Then, to live to him, is "to walk as children of light." Hath "he called them with a holy calling?" To live to him, is, "to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called." He hath brought them into a state of grace, and of reconciliation to himself: they therefore live to him, when they live, not as persons in a state of nature, but in a state of grace; or, as persons "not under the law, but under grace." Hath he graciously forgiven their iniquities, and justified their persons? To live to him, is, to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free."

Hath he renewed and sanctified them, according to his own image? They live to him, when they are "holy in all manner of conversation." Hath he given them, "exceeding great and precious promises, and faith to rely on them?" They live to him, when, "having such promises, they cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Hath he made them, heirs of a glorious inheritance in heaven? Then, to live to him, is, "as strangers and pilgrims on the earth," to "set their affection on," and to "seek, those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." In a word, Hath he graciously advanced them, to joy and peace in believing? They live to him, when they "live in peace," and "serve him with gladness."

3. It also comprises his living in *comfortable communion* with God in Christ, as his God. To live, in the style of the Holy Spirit, is to live comfortably. To live to God, then, is, to live in delightful fellowship with him. Believers live in such communion with God, when they daily contemplate his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and sanctify him in their hearts; when they trust in him at all times, receiving all communications of Grace from him, by the exercise of faith, and returning all to him in grateful obedience; and, when they have his love so shed abroad in their hearts, as to be constrained by it, constantly to love and delight in him. They also live to God, when they live in the comfortable enjoyment of him, as all their portion and felicity, all their salvation and

desire; renouncing all in heaven and upon earth as a portion, but Him alone [p].

4. Lastly, it includes his living in *conformity to God*, as his covenant-God. To live unto God, is to live in conformity to his holy and perfect *nature*; to be holy as he is holy, and to be pressing on toward perfection of holiness. It is to live in conformity to his manner of living. God's way of living, is a holy, a just, a good, a merciful, a gracious, and a faithful way. His way is, to have a general good will to all men, and a special good will to some; and so will that of his people be, in proportion to the degrees of their sanctification. It is a living also in conformity to his *ends*. The chief end, which the Lord proposes to himself in all his works, is, the glory of his infinite name, the honour of his beloved Son, and of his blessed Spirit, the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, the overthrow of Satan's kingdom, and in all, "the praise of the glory of his grace." To live unto God, then, is to make these the chief end of all our thoughts, words, and works. In a word, to live unto God, is, to live in conformity to that law of God as the *rule* of life, which is a transcript of his holy nature, and a revelation of his holy will. They who live to Him, do from love, as well as from conscience, study to keep all his holy commandments. They not only account it their duty, but their privilege and their pleasure, to yield spiritual obedience to his holy law.

[p] Psal. lxxxiii. 25, 26.

SECT. V. *Of the* NECESSITY *of a believer's being dead to the law as a covenant, in order to his living unto God.*

As the believer's living unto God, according to the law as a rule of life in the hand of the Mediator, is, as I shewed above, the necessary consequence or fruit of his having become dead to the law as a covenant of works; so, his being dead to the law, is *necessary* to his living unto God; so absolutely necessary, that were he not dead to the law as a covenant, it would be utterly impossible for him to live unto God, in conformity to the law as a rule. This will be evident to the devout reader, if he consider the following particulars:

1. The man, who is under the power of the law as a broken covenant, is under *the power of sin*; for the law under that form, "is the strength of sin[q]." Hence our Apostle, as was noticed above, said to the saints in Rome, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace[r];" intimating to them, that if they had been still under the law as a covenant, sin *would have had dominion over them.* The believer's deliverance, then, from the dominion of sin, so as to be rendered capable of living to God, necessarily depends upon his "having become dead to the law" in its covenant-form.

2. The sinner who is under the law as a covenant, is *without strength;* and therefore he cannot serve God, in a holy and acceptable manner[s]: and the law, being "weak through the flesh," is as un-

[q] 1 Cor. xv. 56. [r] Rom. vi. 14. [s] Rom. v. 6.

able to sanctify him, as it is to justify him. The works of the law cannot sanctify him. Seeing they are evil, and not good works, they can render him more and more unholy, but they cannot make him holy. He must be "created unto good works, before he can perform them. But the new, as well as the old creation, is the work of God only. While, therefore, a man is under the law as a covenant of works, and is unregenerate, he cannot perform a single holy or good work. He may do many things that are materially good; but he can do nothing that is *formally* good. All his works are "dead works;" the works of a man who is "dead in sin," and dead to God: and therefore, it is as impossible for them, to make him alive to God, as it is, to merit for him eternal life.

3. He who is under the law as a covenant, is *without Christ*, in whom only, quickening and sanctifying grace is to be found. They who live unto God, "are sanctified *in* Christ Jesus[t]," and are saints *in* Him[u]. Their implantation in Christ, instead of being from the law, or works of the law, is wholly from grace; and their sanctification, whilst it is wholly from grace, is only in Christ, "who loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word[w]."

4. The man, who is under the law as a covenant of works, has *no principle* of holiness in him. The grand principle of evangelical holiness, or of living unto God, is, the holy, the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, dwelling in the heart. Now a man receives

[t] 1 Cor. i. 2. [u] Philip. i. 1. [w] Eph. v. 25, 26.

the Spirit of sanctification, "not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith [x]." He becomes a partaker of the Holy Spirit, not by obedience to the law of works, but by means of hearing and embracing the doctrine of faith. It is the new testament or covenant, and not the law or legal covenant, that is "the ministration of the Spirit [y]." It is the glorious gospel, in which, the new covenant is offered, and the Spirit promised, that, through grace, calls a sinner effectually to a life of sanctification [z]. And when the sinner is effectually called, he "receives the promise of the Spirit through faith [a]," the faith of the gospel, and not "by the works of the law." As long, then, as a man is under the law of works, and is of the works of the law, he is destitute of the Spirit of Christ, the main principle of living to God.

5. Once more: The sinner who is under the law as a covenant, has *no promise of sanctification* by that law. The law in its federal form, promises life to him, only on condition of perfect obedience to be performed by himself, and performed in that strength, which was given him in the first Adam; but it promises him, no quickening nor sanctifying influences, to enable him to obey: on the contrary, by its awful curse, it bars effectually, all sanctifying influence from his soul, and shuts it up under the dominion of sin. Indeed, if *true holiness*, or ability to live unto God, were to be found in the man under the covenant of works;—the promises of the covenant of grace, with reverence be it said, *might*

[x] Gal. iii. 2.
[y] 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8.
[z] 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.
[a] Gal. iii. 14.

be altered, and that of sanctification, be expunged from it. We might erase from that well-ordered covenant, especially these promises:—"I shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live[b]." "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them[c]." Were it possible for a sinner, while he continues under the law as a covenant, and consequently, under the dominion and strength of sin, to possess, notwithstanding, true holiness or ability to live unto God; there would, I repeat it, be no need of these and similar promises. But, suppose we had no other proof of it, the very existence of those *absolute* promises in the covenant of grace, proves, with the highest degree of certainty, That no man, while he continues under the law as a covenant of works, *is capable* of living unto God.

Thus it is evident, that a man must be dead to the law as a covenant, in point of justification, and must be dying daily to it, in point of temper and practice; in order to his living unto God, in reference to sanctification. The former, is indispensably requisite to the latter; and the latter, is not only the consequence, but the *necessary* consequence, of the former. It is *absolutely necessary*, that a sinner be dead to the law in its federal form, with respect to his state before God, and also, that he be dying to it, in respect of his inclination and practice, in order to his being *capable* of living a holy life. But to evince still more clearly, the ne-

[b] Ezek. xxxvii. 14. [c] Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

cessity of a man's becoming dead to the law, in order to his living unto God; I shall take a different view of this fundamental subject, and inquire, What *causality* or *influence*, his having become dead to the law as a covenant, has upon his living unto God.

In the *first* place, A man's being dead to the law, has a *physical*, or rather a *spiritual* influence upon his sanctification, or his living unto God.

They who are become dead to the law, are "married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead;" and so, they cannot but live or "bring forth fruit unto God."—In union and communion with Christ Jesus, they have *life*, spiritual and eternal life. While they were under the law as a covenant, they were spiritually as well as legally dead, "dead in trespasses and sins;" but now in Christ, their Head of righteousness and life, they "have life, and have it more abundantly." "Because He liveth, they shall live also." "He that hath the Son hath life." Now that, they have been divorced from the law of works, their first husband, and are united to Christ, they live and act spiritually.—In Christ their Head of influences, they have *light*, as well as life. As long as a man is under the law as a covenant, he dwells in darkness, and cannot see to work the works of holiness, or to be spiritually active in living unto God. He is blinded with ignorance, prejudice, and self-conceit; and as he cannot see the vanity of his legal works, so neither can he discern the way of evangelical holiness. But no sooner is he united to Christ, who is "a Light to lighten the Gentiles," than he receives "the Spirit of wisdom and

revelation in the knowledge of Christ;" and by this spiritual light, shining on the word of Christ, he sees distinctly how to live to God. He discerns the beauty and amiableness, as well as the manner, of true holiness.—In the Lord Jesus, they who are dead to the law, have *strength* likewise. Sinners who are joined to the law as their husband, cannot live to God; for they have no strength for acceptable obedience, and the law cannot afford them any. But believers have, in Christ their spiritual husband, strength to enable them to perform spiritual obedience. He affords them, from his overflowing fulness, sufficient and continual supplies of grace and strength. "His grace is sufficient for them; for his strength is made perfect in weakness[d]." The consequence is, that "all things are possible to them who believe." When, by trusting in him at all times, they are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might[e]," they "can do all things, through Christ who strengtheneth them[f]."—In union with Christ their Covenant-head, they also have *liberty*, the glorious liberty of the children of God. While they were under the law as a covenant, "which gendereth to bondage," they were in bondage, severe bondage to the command of perfect obedience on pain of eternal death; and were also in bondage to the curse of the law, and to the fear of eternal wrath. In this miserable condition, it was impossible for them to live unto God: they could not have, either a heart or a hand to serve him. But in union and communion with the Lord Jesus, believers have li-

[d] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [e] Eph. vi. 10. [f] Philip. iv. 13.

berty. "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed[g];" free to serve God in a spiritual and acceptable manner. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty[h]." Partaking of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, they "walk at liberty," yea, they "run the way of God's commandments; for he enlarges their hearts[i]." Now that, they are "delivered from the hands of their enemies, they serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life[k]." They serve him willingly, affectionately, and cheerfully. They are now at liberty to serve him in hope, "knowing that their labour shall not be in vain." They are at liberty to serve him spiritually, and acceptably; for, as they are so joined to the Lord Jesus, as to be one Spirit, so they are "made accepted in the beloved[l]." Christ their Representative and Surety, satisfied all the demands of the law as a covenant for them: they are therefore accounted in law, as having answered them all in Him, and so are accepted in him. In union with him, their persons are accepted as *righteous*, and their performances, as *sincere*. O how grateful, how cheering, is this liberty, to the exercised believer! And what a delightful and powerful inducement, is it, to that holy and acceptable obedience, which is a living unto God!

In the *last* place, A man's being dead to the law as a covenant, has not only a physical, but a *moral* influence upon his sanctification, or his living unto God. The love of Christ, manifested in

[g] John viii. 36. [h] 2 Cor. iii. 17. [i] Psal. cxix. 32.
[k] Luke i. 74, 75. [l] Eph. i. 6.

delivering believers from the law as a covenant of works, "*constrains them*, to live not unto themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again[m]." Men's natural way of thinking and speaking, is, 'We should serve God, that he may save us;' but the evangelical way is, 'He saves us, that we may serve him: He redeems us from the law as a covenant, that we may serve him and so live to him, in obedience to the law as a rule.' When our Apostle said, "I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God," he, in the next verse, enlarges in these words: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me[n]." It is true believers only, who are dead to the law of works, and are united to the Son of God, that have a true faith and sense of his immense love to them, and that are powerfully constrained by it, to love and live to God. And while redeeming love to them, constrains them to love God as their Covenant-God, they see that, they have every *encouragement* to live to him. They see that, their adorable Surety hath, in wonderful condescension, fulfilled all that righteousness of the law as a covenant, for them, which they could never have fulfilled for themselves; and when, by the eye of faith they perceive this, they are sweetly impelled and encouraged by it, to holiness of heart and of life. If a man have no faith of the love of God in Christ, no hope of his favour as a God of grace, How can that man be "pure in heart," and "holy in all manner of conversation?" Nay he cannot: it is only the man "who hath

[m] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. [n] Gal. ii. 19, 20.

this hope in him, that purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure[o]." All exercised Christians know by experience, That, when their souls are most comforted, and their hearts most enlarged, with the faith of God's favour in Christ, and with the hope of his salvation; then it is, that they are most disposed and encouraged, to live to his glory; and on the contrary, That when, through the prevalence of unbelief, they are most suspicious of God and of his love to them; they then find themselves most averse, from the exercise of graces and performance of duties.

But that the *moral* influence, which, dying to the law as a covenant of works, has upon living unto God, may be more evident; it will be proper to shew, How *every part of the law itself*, having been changed to believers, from the form of a covenant of works, into that of a rule of life in the hand of the Mediator, *constrains* them to evangelical obedience. The law in the hand of Christ as a rule of duty, in all the commands, promises, and threats of it, is as it were, a chariot paved with love for believers. It wears a smiling, an inviting, an encouraging, aspect to them.

1. The *commandments* of the law in the hand of Christ, having been divested of their old covenant-form, discover to believers, much of the love and grace of God. The command of the law as a covenant, as was observed above is, 'Do, and live;' but that of the law as a rule is, 'Live, and do.' The precept of the law of works is, 'Do, or thou shalt die;' but that of the law of Christ is, 'Thou art redeemed from eternal death, therefore Do.'

[o] 1 John iii. 3.

The command of the law in its federal form, is, 'Do perfectly, that thou mayst be entitled to eternal life;' but that of the law in the hand of Christ is, 'He hath merited for thee, and given thee eternal life, therefore Do, by his grace, as perfectly as thou canst, until thou attain absolute perfection.' The command of the law as a rule, is *materially* the same, as that of the law as a covenant; and, therefore, though as much obedience is required in it, as in that of the law of works, yet less is accepted from them, who have the perfect obedience of their Divine Redeemer, imputed to them. And as the command is *materially* the same, so the authority which enjoins obedience, is *originally* the same, and yet vastly distinct: for the commandment of the law as a covenant, is, the command of God *out* of Christ; but the command of the law as a rule, is, the precept of God *in* Christ, of God as a God of grace and love in him. The sovereign *authority* of God, in commanding obedience, is not in the smallest degree lessened, in that, his law is in the hand of Christ; for He, as the eternal Son of God, is the most High God and co-essential with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But whilst it is not, and cannot be, in the least degree lessened; it is, notwithstanding, rendered so mild, so amiable, and so desirable to believers, as powerfully to constrain them to spiritual obedience. For his design, in commanding their obedience, is not, to require from them, a righteousness for their justification; but, to shew them the holiness of his nature, to beautify them with his holy image, to afford them illustrious displays of his glorious grace, to do their souls good in the

most effectual manner, and to favour them with daily opportunities, to glorify him, to edify their neighbour, and so, to manifest their love and gratitude to him, for having redeemed them from the law as a covenant.

2. The *promises* of the law in the hand of Christ, having dropped their old covenant-form, display to believers much of the love of God, and so constrain them to live to him. The law in its federal form, promises eternal life as a reward of *debt*, for perfect obedience; but the law as a rule in the hand of Christ, promises a reward of *grace*, *in* and *after* evangelical obedience; especially, as this obedience is an evidence of union with Him, in whom, believers are justified, and in whom, all the promises of God are yea and amen. The consideration that, "*in* keeping his commandments, there is great reward;" that, *in* the way of evangelical obedience, there is a gracious promise of delightful communion with God and Jesus Christ[p]; and that, *after* the course of such obedience in this world, is ended, there will be an eternal reward; powerfully constrains, and greatly encourages, believers to live unto God.

3. Finally, The *threatenings* of the law as a rule of life, are also divested of their old covenant-form, and are changed into *paternal* threats, issuing from redeeming love, which powerfully incite true Christians to live unto God. There is now no such threatening to the believer, as this; 'If thou *do not*, thou shalt die.' Now that, he is dead to the law of works, and delivered from condemnation

[p] John xiv. 21, 23.

he has no more cause to fear its threatening of eternal death, than a woman has, to fear the threats of a dead husband [q]. Believers, because they "are not under the law as a covenant, but under grace," are under no threatening of eternal wrath, no sentence of condemnation to eternal punishment. The law in the hand of Christ, has indeed threats of chastisement, but they are fatherly, and all from love. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes, &c. [r]:" as if Jehovah had said, 'Although I will not send them to hell, nor deprive them of heaven, any more than I will break my covenant, or violate my oath to my eternal Son; yet as a father, I will chasten them: I will not only visit them with the rod of external affliction, but I will hide my face from their souls; I will deny them that sensible communion with me, which they have sometime enjoyed; and I will fill them with trouble instead of comfort, with bitterness instead of sweetness, and with terror instead of hope.' A filial fear of these paternal chastisements, will do far more to influence the believer to holy obedience, than all the despondent fears of eternal punishment, can do. Accordingly, when he has gone aside, it is commonly such a reflection as this, that through grace, makes him return to the Lord: 'Oh! How am I now deprived of those delightful interviews with my gracious God and Saviour, which I formerly enjoyed! Therefore, "I will go

[q] Rom. viii. 1. [r] Psal. lxxxix. 30—35.

and return to my first Husband; for then, it was better with me than now[t]." And when he is enabled to see that, he is delivered from the threatenings of eternal wrath, and that, he is only under threats of fatherly correction; this breaks and melts his heart more, than all the fire of hell could do. The slavish dread of avenging wrath, disquiets and discourages him, weakens his hands in spiritual obedience, and disposes him to flee from God; whereas, the filial fear of God's fatherly anger, which is kindly, is a motive of love, that excites and urges him to holy living. The former works upon his remaining enmity, and rouses it; but the latter acts upon his love, and inflames it.

But here, the attentive reader may be ready to ask, 'Ought not the believer to live unto God, *without respect* to the threats of paternal chastisement?' I answer: As long as he is in this world, a body of sin dwells in him; and therefore, he *needs* to be incited to his duty, by threats of fatherly correction. He ought indeed to serve the Lord, as the redeemed in heaven do, merely from love to the command itself, and because it is his God and Saviour who command him. Still however, as on the one hand, he is *perfect in Christ* his federal Head and Representative, he needs not have respect to what the law in its covenant-form, either promises or threatens[u]; so, on the other,

[t] Hos. ii. 7.

[u] It is not here meant, that believers need not regard with holy admiration and gratitude, the grace manifested in the promise of the covenant of works; nor, that they need not regard with holy awe, the terrible wrath revealed in the threatening of that broken

as he is *imperfect in himself* while here, it is his duty to have, in his obedience, regard to what the law as a rule in the hand of Christ, promises and threatens; which, indeed, is a holy and affectionate regard, tending to promote holiness in his heart and life.

Thus it is manifest, that the *whole form* of the law as a covenant of works, having been dissolved to believers, the law as a rule of life in the hand of Christ, is all love, all grace; and so it influences and constrains them to advance, with increasing ardour, in evangelical holiness. Instead of affording them, the smallest encouragement to commit sin, it not only requires, but like a cord of love it draws them to, the love and practice of universal holiness [w].

So much for the influence, that a believer's being dead to the law as a covenant, has upon his living unto God.

A FEW reflections from what has been said, will conclude this Chapter.

Is it the privilege of true believers only, to be dead

covenant: but *only*, that they need not, and should not, have respect to them, or take them into their view, as *motives* to live unto God, or to obey the law as a rule of life.

[w] For the greater part of what has been advanced in the last two Sections, I have been indebted to the substance of four excellent Sermons, by Mr RALPH ERSKINE.—If the reader choose to receive further information, respecting the highly important subject of the whole Chapter, he may peruse Mr BOOTH'S Treatise, entitled, The death of legal hope, the life of evangelical obedience, Mr HALL'S Sermon on Gal. ii. 19. and Mr BOSTON'S Sermon on Rom. vi. 14.

to the law as a covenant of works? Then the law in its covenant-form, is, to every unregenerate sinner, *as much in force as ever it was.* It retains all the authority and dominion over unconverted sinners, that ever it had. As it is dead to believers, and they dead to it; so, sinners in their unregenerate state are alive to it, and it is alive to them. Retaining all its original authority over them, it continues to demand from them, perfect obedience as the condition of life, and complete satisfaction for sin. This is clearly taught us, not only by the Lord Jesus, but also by the apostle Paul[x]; and all who continue, to reject the second Adam and his consummate righteousness, shall to their everlasting confusion, find it so. Oh, that secure sinners would believe this, and flee for refuge to the great Redeemer, before it be too late!

Does the law as a covenant, require of every descendant of Adam, *personal*, as well as perfect obedience? Then it inevitably follows, That the obedience of two or more, cannot form a justifying righteousness. Righteousness for justification, must be the obedience of *one* only. It must be the obedience, either of the sinner himself only, or of Christ only. The Lord Jesus will, either save sinners himself alone, or not save them at all[y]. If a man would be justified before God, he must exhibit to the law, either a *perfect* righteousness of his own, and have no dependance on that of Christ; *or*, the perfect righteousness of Christ, in the hand of faith, and place no reliance on his own[z]. The

[x] Luke x. 25—28. Gal. iii. 10.

[y] Acts iv. 12. [z] Philip. iii. 9.

righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed to believers for their justification, is a righteousness *without works;* a righteousness wholly unconnected with works of any kind, performed by themselves. These two cannot stand together in the affair of justification. "I will make mention of thy righteousness," says the holy Psalmist, "even of thine only [a]." O let my reader take heed, that in the affair of justification, he do not connect his own obedience with that of Christ, nor Christ's obedience with his own; that he never presume to make up a justifying righteousness for himself, partly of his own works, and partly of those of Christ. Let him be zealous for good works, and perform them as fruits and evidences of justification, but never, as *grounds of right to it.* For it will be impossible for him to live unto God, till he begin to die to all hope of justification and salvation, either in whole or in part, by his own performances.

Is it *through* the law, that a man becomes dead to the law? It is obvious then, that *ignorance* in unregenerate sinners, is a *principal cause* of their self-righteous temper [b]. Their ignorance of the infinite holiness, justice, and faithfulness of God; of the precept and penalty of his righteous law; of the covenant, the promise, and the design of his gospel; of the person, righteousness, fulness, and glory of Christ; and of their own extreme need of Christ; —this wilful, this pharisaical ignorance is, a special cause of their desire to be under the law of works [c]. O that they would no longer contemn the counsel,

[a] Psal. lxxi. 16. [b] Rom. x. 3.
[c] John iii. 19. Gal. iii. 1.

which the exalted Redeemer offers to each of them! "I counsel thee to buy of me, gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see[d]." Ah, secure sinner, how gross, how reproachful, is your ignorance, when you expect to become *righteous* in the sight of an omniscient and holy God, by your own partial and polluted obedience! How blind, are the eyes of your understanding, when you can presume to hope, that the holy and righteous law, will accept *your* amendment and sincere obedience, *your* penitence and tears, instead of *perfect* obedience, and *perfect* satisfaction for your innumerable sins! Alas! you do not know that, the violated law demands, and cannot but demand from you, perfect obedience, and, at the same time, complete satisfaction for all your aggravated crimes; and that, it will not absolve you, till *all* its high demands be fully satisfied. O continue no longer ignorant, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of your inexpressible misery and danger, under the law as a covenant, and of your extreme need, of the righteousness and grace of the second Adam.

Is a man's being dead to the law as a covenant, the *reason* why he lives unto God? Then it must be admitted, that the reason, or at least one reason, why unbelievers and formalists live not to God, but to sin, and self, and the world is, That they are *not* dead to the law in that form. The very reason why sin reigns in the sinner, is, because

[d] Rev. iii. 17, 18.

he is under the dominion of the law; which stands as a bar, to prevent sanctifying influences from flowing into his heart. The law, especially in its condemning and irritating power, "is the strength of sin[e]." Every man, therefore, who is under the dominion of the law as a covenant, is, and *cannot but be*, under the dominion and strength of sin[f]. It is impossible for that man, who continues alive to the law, to be a holy or a godly man. He may have the form, but he cannot experience the power, of godliness. He may take his encouragement from the law as a covenant, and delight in the works of it; but he cannot delight in the holiness and spirituality of the law as a rule. He may advance to a high degree of counterfeit virtue; but he remains an entire stranger to true holiness. Reader, the only way, in which it is possible for you to attain true or evangelical holiness, is, to be so convinced of sin and righteousness, as to part with your legal righteousness. You cannot trust cordially in the Lord Jesus, for righteousness and strength, till you begin utterly to despair of being able, to work out for yourself, such a righteousness as the law requires. You cannot desire the great salvation, offered to you in the gospel, until you despair utterly, of salvation by the works of the law. Nor is it possible for you to live unto God, till you die to all hope of redemption, from the curse of the broken law, and from the justice of an offended God, by any righteousness of your own. Be assured that, you must be dead to the law as a covenant, in order to be

[e] 1 Cor. xv. 56. [f] Rom. vi. 14.

either able or willing, to yield the smallest degree of acceptable obedience, to the law as a rule.

How inexpressibly *miserable* are they, who are alive to the law as a covenant of works! They may "have a name to live, but they are *dead*." They are dead to God; to the favour, the image, the service, and the enjoyment of God. They are legally dead; for they are under the tremendous curse of the violated law, and are liable every moment, to the intolerable and eternal wrath of almighty God. They are morally dead likewise; for they are destitute of spiritual life; and they have no inclination, nor ability, to live unto God. Such persons know not, what it is to live a life, either of justification, or of sanctification, or of consolation. The righteous law condemns them, because they have transgressed it; and its awful sentence, not only shuts them up under the dominion of spiritual death, but binds them over to all the horrors of death eternal. Oh! secure sinner, the state in which you are, is that of a criminal condemned to death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Do not say, 'I hope, that is not *my* state:' for you "are of the works of the law;" you are depending on your own works, for a title to the favour of God, and the happiness of heaven: and this renders it *certain*, that you are under the curse or condemning sentence of the law: for thus saith the Spirit of inspiration, "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse[g]." O renounce, and that without delay, all dependance on your own works. Believe that, the Lord Jesus with his righ-

[g] Gal. iii. 10.

teousness and salvation, is freely, wholly, and particularly, offered to you; and, relying on his consummate righteousness alone, for all your right to justification and salvation, trust in Him, not only for deliverance from the curse of the law, but for complete Salvation. So shall you become dead to the law of works, and, in union with the second Adam, be instated in the covenant of grace.

All believers have, in the eye of the law as a covenant of works, *obeyed, suffered, and satisfied fully*, in Jesus Christ their federal Representative and Surety. As all mankind have sinned, and become subject to death, *in* the first Adam; so all true believers have obeyed, died, and so satisfied the law and justice of God, *in* the second Adam. Thus, they have answered and completely satisfied, all the demands of the law as a covenant. The consequence is, That the law in *that* form, having received all that it had to demand from them, absolves them from guilt, and declares them righteous. Hence they become dead to the law, and the law, to them. The Representative and the represented, the Surety and the principal debtor, are, in legal estimation, but *one person*. They therefore are accounted in law, to have done and suffered all, that Christ their Representative and Surety, did and suffered for them. Accordingly, they are said in Scripture, to be crucified with Christ[h], to be dead and buried with him[i], and to be raised up together in him[k]. They have obeyed and suffered, and so satisfied every demand of the law as

[h] Gal. ii. 20. [i] Rom. vi. 4, 8.
[k] Eph. ii. 6.

a covenant, not in their own persons, but in the person of Christ.

Although the sins, which believers commit *after* the commencement of their vital union with Christ, are not *formally*, transgressions of the law as a covenant of works; yet, they are all, by *legal interpretation*, sins against it. In the justification of believers, in which, they have become dead to the law as a covenant, all their future sins, considered as transgressions of the law in *that form*, are forgiven. As sins against the law as a covenant, they, in the act of justification, are so pardoned, that a non-imputation of them to believers, is inviolably secured. "Blessed is the man," says the apostle Paul, "to whom the Lord will *not impute sin*[1]." All the sins of believers after, as well as before, their vital union with Christ, were charged and punished on Him, as transgressions of the law in its federal form; and as such, are, in their justification, freely and wholly pardoned. The Lord Jesus their Divine Surety, hath satisfied the justice of God, for all their sins committed after, as well as before, the act of their justification; and that by enduring in their stead, the punishment threatened in the covenant of works. Though, therefore, their sins after union with Christ, are directly and formally, committed against the law as a rule of duty; yet, by legal interpretation, they are transgressions likewise, of the law as a covenant of works.

Are believers *wholly delivered* from the *condemning power* of the law as a covenant? The *guilt* of

[1] Rom. iv. 8.

sin, then, in reference to them is *twofold;* the guilt of eternal wrath, and the guilt of paternal anger. The guilt of eternal wrath, is, a sinner's obligation or liableness to the avenging and eternal wrath of God, as the just punishment of his sin. The guilt of fatherly displeasure, on the other hand, is a believer's obnoxiousness to the awful effects of God's paternal anger, as chastisements for his disobedience. Accordingly, the pardon of sin is twofold; namely, a removal of the guilt of eternal wrath from him, in the *act* of his justification, and an absolving of him from the guilt of paternal displeasure, in the *progress* of his sanctification. The former is called, legal pardon; the latter, gospel pardon. The one is, the instantaneous and perfect removal of all that guilt, which was contracted, by transgressing the law as a covenant: the other is, the gradual removal of that guilt, which is contracted daily, by disobeying the law as a rule. That, is afforded completely and at once, to a converted sinner, upon his first acting of faith, when he becomes dead to the law as a covenant: this, is vouchsafed to a believer repeatedly, upon his renewed exercise of faith and repentance. When therefore a true Christian, who is in some happy measure assured of his justification, prays with *understanding*, for the pardon of his iniquities; he prays that, the Lord may preserve and increase in him, his assurance of the pardon, which was given him in his justification[m]; and also that, he may graciously remove from him, the guilt of fatherly displeasure, which he is daily contracting[n]. And

[m] Larger Cat. Quest. 194. [n] Psal. li. 8—12.

when he asks Divine acceptance; he prays that the Lord may preserve and increase in him, his assurance of the acceptance of his person in the beloved; and that, he may favour him daily with the acceptance of his performances.

Are believers dead to the law as a covenant, and is it dead to them? Then it cannot, either *promise* eternal life, or *threaten* eternal death, to them. "What things soever the law saith," either in its promise of life, or in its threatening of death, "it saith to them who are under the law [o]." But believers "are not under the law but under grace [p];" and therefore, the law in its federal form, can say nothing to them. In their justification by faith, they are delivered from condemnation to eternal death, and are accounted so righteous, as to be fully entitled to eternal life [q]. They are already redeemed from eternal death, and they have already the begun possession of life eternal. How then can the law, either promise eternal life, or threaten eternal death, to those who, by their communion with Christ in his righteousness and fulness, have already attained the one, and escaped the other? Though believers ought always, to regard the threatenings of the law as a covenant, with holy awe, as a glass in which, they may contemplate the dreadful demerit of their sins, and their infinite obligations to redeeming grace; yet, they ought not to consider those threatenings, as directed to them, or as denunciations of evil against them. They should regard them at all times, with filial awe, but never, with slavish dread.

[o] Rom. iii. 19. [p] Rom. vi. 14. [q] John iii. 16.

Is every man who is justified before God, and so dead to the law as a covenant, taught to believe that, his own works of obedience, form no part at all of a justifying righteousness for him? It would surely be *very unreasonable and unjust*, to infer from this, That he needs not perform good works. He is indeed delivered, and wholly delivered, from the law as a covenant of works; but he is still, under the infinite and eternal obligation of it as a rule of duty. To infer, then, from a believer's being directed and exhorted, to place no confidence in his good works, for a title to justification and eternal life, That it is not necessary for him to perform and maintain good works; would be as absurd, as if a man should conclude that, because it is the ear only that hears, there is no need of the foot or the hand[r].

Once more: Are true believers delivered from the commanding, condemning, and irritating, power of the law as a covenant? Let them then, amidst all their trials, and all their conflicts with spiritual enemies, *be of good comfort.* O let them rejoice exceedingly, in that almighty, that compassionate, that dear Redeemer, who, in his love and in his pity, hath redeemed them from the dominion and curse of the broken law[s]. You, O believer, are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, and are married to another husband, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that you may bring forth fruit unto God[t]. You are dead to the law of works; nevertheless you live: you live to God, as your own God, your covenant-God, and you serve

[r] Rom. iii. 8. Jude 4.
[s] Gal. iii. 13.
[t] Rom. vii. 4.

him in newness of spirit. In union with your living Redeemer, who loved you, and gave himself for you, you live a life of justification; and consequently, it is your privilege, as well as your duty, to live a life of sanctification, and of consolation. Being justified by faith, you have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and in some measure, peace of conscience.—If then, the law as a covenant of works, should at any time enter your conscience again, and require *perfect obedience* from you, as the ground of your title to eternal life, saying, "This do, and thou shalt live;" present to it, in the hand of faith, the perfect obedience of your Divine Surety, in answer to that demand. And, as often as the law in your conscience, repeats the high demand, renew you, your application of His consummate obedience, and trust firmly, that it was performed for you, in order to entitle you to eternal life; and the righteous law, magnified and made honourable by that meritorious obedience, will, in proportion as you do so, cease to disturb the peace of your conscience. The spotless obedience of the second Adam, is, as was observed above, the *only obedience*, which you should present to the law as a covenant of works; and your own personal obedience, is the *only obedience*, which you ought to exhibit to it as a rule of life.—And should the law as a covenant, ever be permitted to rise again as from the dead, and to attempt exercising its *condemning power* over your conscience, by demanding from you, satisfaction for your innumerable transgressions of it; present to it, in the hand of an appropriating faith, the infinite satisfaction for sin, given by your adorable Surety, in answer

to that demand. Trust anew, that your living Head, your heavenly Husband, has given complete satisfaction for all your sins; and so, referring the law to Him, plead that, if it have any charge to exhibit against you, the action must lie between it and Him. Never say to the law, in answer to any of its demands, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all;" but *without delay*, present it with full payment. In answer to its demand of perfect obedience as the condition of life, present in the hand of faith to it, the perfect obedience of the second Adam; and in answer to its demand of complete satisfaction for sin, exhibit to it, his infinite atonement for the sins of all who believe in him. That is the way to honour it, and at the same time, to recover and maintain peace of conscience.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE HIGH OBLIGATIONS UNDER WHICH BELIEVERS LIE, TO YIELD EVEN PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW AS A RULE OF LIFE.

All who are united to Christ, and justified for his righteousness imputed to them, are dead to the law as a covenant; not that, "they may be without law to God, but that, they may be under the law to Christ," not that, they may continue in disobedience, but that, they may be inclined and enabled to perform sincere obedience in time, and perfect obedience through eternity, to the law as a

rule of life. One design, of their being delivered from the obligation of the law in its federal form, is, that they may be brought under the eternal obligation of it, as a rule of duty, in the hand of the adorable Mediator. Divested of the form of a covenant of works, to believers, and invested with that of the covenant of grace; it stands under the covenant of grace, as the law of Christ, and as the instrument of government in its spiritual kingdom, enforced by all its original and immutable authority. It loses nothing of its original authority, by its being conveyed to believers, in such a blessed channel as the hand of Christ; since He himself is God over all, and since the majesty, sovereignty, and authority, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are in Him as Mediator[u]. Indeed, it behoved the law of the ten commandments, inasmuch as it is the substance of the law of nature, a delineation of God's moral image, and a transcript of his unspotted holiness, to be a perpetual and unalterable rule of conduct to mankind, in all the possible states and circumstances, in which they might be placed. Since God is unchangeable in his moral image, nothing but the entire annihilation of every human creature, can divest his holy law of that office. Its being an immutable rule of duty to the human race, does not in the least, depend on its having become the matter of the covenant of works. Whatever form it might receive, whether that of the covenant of works, or that of the covenant of grace; still it could not but continue an authoritative *rule* of conduct. No form,

[u] Exod. xxiii. 21.

no covenant whatever, could at any time, lessen its high obligation as a rule of duty, on the reasonable creature. As the form of the first covenant, was merely accessory to the moral law; so the law continues, and will forever continue, under *that* form, the rule of duty, to sinners even in the place of torment: and as the form of the second covenant, is also accessory to it; so it will remain eternally under *this* form, the rule of life, to saints in the mansions of glory. The sovereign authority of the Divine law, continues eternally the same; and it can never be in the least impaired by any of the forms, under which that law is promulgated to us. And seeing God the Father hath so consulted the necessity of his redeemed, in subordination to his own glory, as to put his law into the hands of his eternal Son as Mediator; from these hands, they receive it invested with all the sovereign authority, that ever belonged to it, together with all, that God the Son as their great Redeemer has added to it. That believers ought not to receive, nay, and cannot receive, the law otherwise than, from the hand of the infinitely glorious Mediator, is so far from being injurious, to the infinite Majesty of God, the sovereign Creator, or to the high obligation of his holy law; that the infinite honour of his glorious Majesty, and of his holy law, is thereby most illustriously displayed. As the law as a covenant of works, was honoured in an infinite degree, by its having been obeyed and satisfied, by the eternal Son of God in our nature; so, as a rule of life to believers, it is magnified in no less a degree, by its being conveyed to them in His hand. Their obligation to perform, not only sincere, but

even perfect obedience to it, is, on these accounts, confirmed and increased. Now the obligation, under which all true believers are, to yield such obedience to the law as a rule of life, proceeds chiefly from the following sources:

1. It arises from God's being the LORD, or from his being the sovereign, super-eminent, and supremely excellent Jehovah. The obligation under which believers lie, to yield obedience to his law, arises from his universal supremacy, and sovereign authority over them as rational creatures. "Ye shall, therefore, keep my statutes and my judgements:--- I am the LORD[w]." "Ye shall keep my statutes and do them: I am the LORD which sanctifieth you[x]." Because God is Jehovah, 'the eternal, immutable, and almighty God, having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works[y],' all obedience is due to him. The infinite greatness, excellence, and amiableness, of the perfections of Jehovah, make it the duty of all men, and especially of all believers, to love Him supremely, to obey him in all things, and to make his glory, the chief end of all their obedience to him. The infinite super-eminence and amiableness of Jehovah, lay them under inconceivably high obligations, to love Him above themselves, and to live to him ultimately, and not to themselves. And as his greatness, excellence, and loveliness, are infinite, immutable, and eternal, and as the highest possible degree of love and obedience, is therefore due to him; so the obligation,

[w] Lev. xviii. 5. [x] Lev. xx. 8.

[y] Larger Cat. Quest. 101.

under which believers lie, to love and obey him even in a perfect degree, is infinite, immutable, and eternal. They are thus bound, to love and obey him with all their hearts, because he is the LORD, or because he is what he is. On this account principally, and antecedently to every other consideration of him, he is inexpressibly amiable; and, therefore, they are under the firmest obligation to love and obey him, and that in the highest possible degree. This obligation, arising from that infinite greatness, excellence, and loveliness of God, which result from his natural and moral perfections, is binding upon believers, previously to any consideration of rewards or punishments, or even of the revealed *will* of God; and it is that from which, all other ties to duty, derive their obligatory force. It is from the infinite excellence, and amiableness, of the Divine nature, that every additional obligation under which they lie, to perfect love and perfect obedience, derives its binding force.

2. The obligation under which believers are, to yield perfect obedience to the law as a rule, flows also from God's being *their Creator*, and their being *his creatures*. "It is he who made them and not they themselves[z]." "They receive life, and breath, and all things," from his creating hand. His right therefore to them, and to their perfect and perpetual obedience, is not only original, underived, and perfect, but infinite. The power which he employed in creating them, was infinite; and, therefore, he has an infinite right to all that they are, and have, and can perform. By right of

[z] Psal. c. 3.

creation, the Lord has an irreversible and perpetual claim, to their supreme love, and their cordial and grateful obedience. The relation subsisting between him as their Creator, and them as his creatures, lays them under the firmest bond of subjection and obedience to him; and the grace of the gospel, instead of diminishing, increases the force of that natural obligation. The sovereign Creator, is far from having resigned his right of dominion over his saints, by his having afforded them, independent of their own works, a title to eternal life. For, as they cease not to be creatures, by being made *new* creatures; so they are, and shall eternally continue bound, by the sovereign authority of the triune God as their Creator, to yield personal and perfect obedience, to his law as a rule of life. The Divine law, as I have already observed, loses nothing of its original obligation, by being devested of its covenant-form, and conveyed to believers, in the hand of Christ: for "by HIM were all things *created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible [a];" and the sovereignty, authority, and all other excellencies of the Father, are in the Son; yea, "in Him dwelleth *all the fulness* of the Godhead bodily [b]." Indeed, that high obligation cannot cease to retain its original force, as long as the immutable and eternal Jehovah, cannot cease to be the Creator, and the saints, to be his creatures.

3. Their obligation to obey the Divine law as a rule of duty, arises from God's being their *continual Preserver*. "In him," says the apostle Paul,

[a] Col. i. 16. [b] Col. ii. 9.

"we live, and move, and have our being[c]." And says the holy Psalmist, "Lord, thou preservest man and beast[d]." His eyes are upon all his works, so that even "a sparrow, cannot fall to the ground without him." "By the word of his power, he upholds all" his creatures in their being and operation. Every living creature lives upon his goodness, and subsists by his bounty. His infinite power every moment upholds all, his unsearchable wisdom governs all, and his unbounded goodness cares and provides for all. "He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing[e]." But in a special manner, "he preserveth the souls of his saints[f]." "The Lord preserveth all them that love him[g]." "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore[h]." Since believers, then, are every moment dependent on God, for the continuance and comfort, both of their natural, and of their spiritual life; they are bound, in obedience to his law as the rule of their life, to love him supremely, to serve him constantly, and "to glorify him in their body, and in their spirit, which are his." The necessary relation, in which they stand to him as their constant Preserver, obliges them to devote cheerfully, all that they are, and have, and do, to his service and glory. Their being and their welfare, are continually upheld and defended by his omnipotent arm; and therefore, these ought at all

[c] Acts xvii. 28. [d] Psal. xxxvi. 6. [e] Psal. cxlv. 16.
[f] Psal. xcvii. 10. [g] Psal. cxlv. 20. [h] Psal. cxxi. 7, 8.

times to be employed for him. And, because his manifested glory is *his* chief end, in preserving his saints, they are bound to make it *their* chief end also, in all that they do[i].

4. The obligation, under which the spiritual seed of Christ lie, to perform perfect and perpetual obedience to the law of God, flows also from his *being their God in covenant.* He is their God in Christ, and in the covenant of grace; and this obliges them, to perform universal obedience to his righteous law, as it is in the hand of Christ, and as it stands under the covenant of grace.—He is their God in *grant or offer.* He offers Christ, the blessed Mediator to them, in common with all the other hearers of the gospel, and he also offers Himself to them, to be in Christ their God.—In the preface to the ten commandments, he saith to every hearer of the gospel, "I am the Lord thy God;" I am, as if he had said, thy God in offer: and in the first commandment, as was observed above, he requires every one, to believe the gracious offer with application to himself, saying, "Thou shalt have *no other Gods* before me[k]." He commands every man, 'to know and acknowledge Him to be the only true God, and *his* God,' upon the ground of the unlimited offer; and he enables all his own people to believe cordially, that he is their God in offer.—He is also their God in *choice.* In the exercise of their faith, they choose the Lord Jesus to be their Saviour, and God in him, to be their covenant-God, saying, "What have we to do any more with idols[l]?" "This God is our

[i] 1 Cor. x. 31. [k] Exod. xx. 2, 3. [l] Hos. xiv. 8.

God for ever and ever[m]." Each of them is enabled to say to the Lord, as the Psalmist did, "I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God[n];" as if he had said, 'Thou art my God, not only in offer, but in choice, or in preference to every other god; and I, accordingly, have trusted in thee as my God, and placed all my hope, and all my happiness, in thee.'—He is their God also in *possession*. By believing cordially that he is theirs in offer, and by choosing him for their God and portion, in preference to every other god, as well as by trusting that, in Christ, he will perform the part of a God to them, they *take possession* of him as their God. According to their faith in him, is their possession and enjoyment of him: and in bestowing Himself on them as their God and portion, he makes over to them, all that he *is*, and *has*, and *does*, and *will do*, to be theirs, in time and through eternity[o]. Seeing then that, in amazing condescension, he bestows Himself upon them as their God; they are under infinite obligations, to devote themselves and all that they are, and have, and do, to Him, as his people. By his being their God, they are firmly bound, as well as powerfully excited, to love him supremely, and to delight in yielding spiritual and universal obedience to him. 'Because he is the Lord and their God, they are bound to keep all his commandments:' and because it is of sovereign *grace*, that he has been pleased to become their God, they are bound, to obey his law as it stands in his covenant

[m] Psal. xlviii. 14. [n] Psal. xxxi. 14.
[o] Hos. xiii. 4. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. 1 Cor. iii. 21.

of *grace;*—to obey it, not that he may become their God, but because he is already their God. The covenant-right which, according to his gracious promise, they have to him as their God, gives him an additional claim to them, and to all their love and obedience.

5. Their obligation to obey his law as a rule of conduct, proceeds likewise from his being *their redeeming God.* "In his love and in his pity, he hath redeemed them." From eternity, he, according to the good pleasure of his will, has chosen them to everlasting salvation, and has devised the amazing scheme of their redemption. In the immensity of his redeeming love, and in the exceeding riches of his glorious grace, God the Father hath sent his only begotten Son, to purchase redemption for them, and his adorable Spirit, to apply it to them. He has appointed his only Son, to answer the demands of his law as a covenant for them, that they might be justified; and his Holy Spirit, to write his law as a rule on their hearts, that they might be sanctified. As means of attaining the inestimable benefits of eternal redemption, he has moreover favoured them, with the doctrines, and promises, and ordinances, of his blessed gospel. Thus the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one Jehovah, stands in the endearing relation of a redeeming God, to all true believers: Christ the glorious Mediator, stands in the relation of a near Kinsman, an incarnate Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit, in the relation of a Sanctifier and Comforter to them. And, while God the Father, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit, stand in these and other endearing relations to believers, believ-

ers stand in all the correspondent relations to them. Now from those relations, an additional obligation to love and to good works, arises; which, instead of impairing, does greatly strengthen, all the other ties under which believers lie, to yield evangelical and universal obedience. Because God graciously redeems them, from the hand of all their enemies, and that, with an infinite price, and by infinite power; they are surely under the firmest possible obligations, "to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life[p]." The notion of a Divine Redeemer, implies that of a *Creator*. "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that *formed* thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things[q]." As God's being the Redeemer of his people, then, implies his being their Creator, in subordination to his glory in the redemption of them; so, the obligation to obedience, arising from his being their sovereign Creator, is implied in, and strengthened by, the obligation flowing from his being their Redeemer. The redeeming grace of God in Christ, is so far from lessening the force of the natural obligation, under which believers as *creatures* lie, to love and obey him, that it increases this obligation, in the highest possible degree. The great God who is glorious in holiness, has not resigned his right of sovereign authority over his saints, by redeeming them from the law as a covenant, and from their spiritual enemies; but on the contrary, he has hereby laid them under further and stronger obligations, to universal obedi-

[p] Luke i. 74, 75. [q] Isa. xliv. 24.

ence to the law as a rule. The more illustrious, the displays of his glorious perfections, and especially of his infinite goodness, are, which he has afforded in their redemption, the greater are their obligations to obedience. When they consider that, they have the righteousness of the incarnate Redeemer imputed to them, to entitle them to eternal life, and his Spirit dwelling in them, to make them meet for the perfection of it; they must surely acknowledge themselves, to be under the firmest obligations possible, to devote themselves entirely, to the service and glory of their redeeming God.

In order to be satisfied of the truth of this, we need only to consider the new relations mentioned above, from which arises a set of new duties, which no man is capable of performing, or has access to perform, unless he previously be a partaker of those relations. Of this class of duties, are the faith, and love, and reverence, and worship, which believers owe, to *Christ* the adorable Mediator, to *God* in the relations of a Friend, a Father, and a God in covenant, and to the *Holy Spirit* dwelling in them, as a Quickener, Sanctifier, and Comforter; as also, the duties which they owe to fellow-saints, as members of Christ's mystical body. From those endearing relations, and the inestimable blessings issuing from them, believers cannot but be laid under new and peculiar obligations, not only to perform these, but all the other duties required of them, in the law as a rule of life.

6. The *holy will* of God, revealed in his law as a rule of duty to believers, lays them under infinite obligations to obedience. The law in the hand of

Christ is, to his spiritual seed, not only the rule, but the *reason*, of their duty. They are bound, not only to do that which is required in the law, and to leave undone that which is forbidden; but they must do what is commanded, for this very reason that the Lord requires it, and abstain from what is forbidden, because He forbids it. "Thou hast commanded us," says the holy Psalmist, "to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes[r]!" To keep his commandments is, according to the phraseology of Scripture "to *do his will*." "He that doeth the will of God," says the apostle John, "abideth for ever[s]." And says another Apostle, "This is the will of God even your sanctification[t]." It is the will, not only of God the *Father*, but of God the *Son*. "I have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain[u]." It is the will also of God the *Holy Spirit;* whom believers grieve, and even quench, when they do not study to advance daily, in the love and practice of universal holiness. The law as a rule is, not only a transcript of the infinite purity of God's holy nature; but it is, at the same time, a declaration of his holy *will*, respecting the duty which his people owe to him. They are, then, under the firmest ties to keep his holy commandments, because it is his will that they should keep them. His will declared in his law, is infinitely, eternally, and immutably holy; and therefore, in connection with the other sources of obligation already men-

[r] Psal. cxix. 4, 5.
[s] 1 John ii. 17.
[t] 1 Thess. iv. 3.
[u] John xv. 16.

tioned, it lays believers under the highest possible obligations, to perfect and perpetual obedience of heart and of life, to his holy law.

7. Once more: The obligation under which believers are, to obey the law as a rule, arises also from the inexpressible *benefit or advantage of holiness*, to themselves. The law in the hand of Christ, is not only holy and just, but it is *good*. It is good in itself and good for believers. It requires nothing of them, but what it is good for them to perform, and to endure nothing, but what is suitable and advantageous to them; and nothing, but what is agreeable and delightful to the new and holy nature, imparted to them in regeneration. To be enabled, then, from principles of faith and love, and for the glory of God, to perform spiritual obedience to such a law, is profitable, honourable, and delightful, to real believers. It is *profitable* for them. "Godliness is profitable unto all things[w]." "Godliness with contentment is great gain[x]." "Charge them that are rich in this world,---that they do good, that they be *rich* in good works[y]." "These things are good and profitable unto men[z]." "To love the Lord their God, with all their heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and their neighbour as themselves," is the very perfection of their nature, the highest advantage of which it is capable. Holy obedience to the law in the hand of Christ, is also *honourable* to believers. "If any man serve me," saith our blessed Lord, "him will my Father honour[a]." And again, "If a man love me he

[w] 1 Tim. iv. 8. [x] 1 Tim. vi. 6. [y] 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.
[z] Tit. iii. 8. [a] John xii. 26.

will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him [b]." What a high honour, what an exalted distinction, is conferred on sinful worms of the dust, when they are not only beautified with the holy image of God, but are advanced to intimate fellowship with him! Conformity of heart and of life to the Divine law, is true honour. To resemble Him, who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, is the honour, the glory of a man. To yield obedience to the law of Christ, is *delightful* also to holy souls. As they delight in the law itself, so they take pleasure, in yielding spiritual obedience to all its holy commandments. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness" to them. Holiness is not only connected with happiness, but is *itself* happiness. A man is miserable, in proportion as he is sinful, and happy, in the same degree in which he is holy. In obedience, there is a present and a great reward. True holiness is, the health and happiness, the peace and pleasure of the soul. It renders the external comforts of the believer, doubly pleasant, and his heaviest crosses light; his life valuable, and his death desirable. The holy commandments are inscribed on his heart; and therefore, he is well pleased with the purity, spirituality, and goodness of them. He delights in meditating on them [c], and especially on the holiness of them; he counts them an easy yoke; and he chooses and resolves, to perform spiritual and perpetual obedience to them. He knows by experience That he is happy, in pro-

[b] John xiv. 23. [c] Psal. i. 2.

portion as his inclinations, thoughts, words, and actions, are holy; and that he is in his proper element, only when he is exercising graces, and performing duties. Now, seeing holiness is, in subordination to the glory of God, profitable, honourable, and pleasant, to believers themselves, and so is highly beneficial to them; they are bound, to make continual progress in the love and practice of it. As they are bound to glorify God as their redeeming God, and in subordination to this, to advance in the enjoyment of Him; so, they are under strong obligations, in obedience to his holy law, to advance in conformity to him, and in communion with him: for they cannot glorify him, but in proportion as they enjoy him, and they cannot enjoy him, but by such conformity to his image, as is the fruit of communion with him. Let every believer then endeavour diligently, to advance in faith and holiness, according to the law of Christ; for, "*blessed* is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is [d];" and "*blessed* also is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments [e]."

From what has now been said, we may warrantably infer that, All they, to whom the law of the ten commandments is given, as the authoritative rule of their life, *have already received spiritual life*, as the beginning of life eternal. They have all been quickened by the Spirit of Christ, united to him as their living Head, instated in his covenant of grace, and justified for his righteousness im-

[d] Jer. xvii. 7. [e] Psal. cxii. 1.

puted to them; and so, they have received already, the beginnings of eternal life, as the gift of God through him. "He that believeth on the Son, *hath* everlasting life[f]." And again, "Whosoever *liveth* and believeth in me, shall *never die*[g]." The law as a covenant of works, says to the *dead* sinner, 'Do this, and live; Do this, *for* life:' the law as a rule of life, on the contrary says to the *living* saint, 'Live and do this; Do this, not for, but *from* life already received.' All they, then, to whom the law as a rule of life in the hand of the Mediator, is given, have already, in their regeneration, received the beginning of eternal life, previous to their being capable, of performing the smallest degree of obedience to the law in that form. They cannot obey the law as a rule of life, otherwise than by working *from* life; but this supposes them to have life, previous to such working, and as the principle of it. Christ liveth in them, and they live by the faith of Him. Their spiritual and eternal life, is the life of Christ, life which is wholly derived from Him; and the rule of it, by which all its activity is to be regulated, is the Divine law as the law of Christ[h]. Regeneration and vital union with Christ, are previously and absolutely necessary, to the *smallest act* of acceptable obedience to the law as *a rule of life.*

Does the law as a rule of life, *oblige* believers to yield even *perfect* obedience to its precepts? We ought not to infer from this, That it can either *justify* them before God, or *condemn* them. To justify, or to condemn a man, belongs to the law as a

[f] John iii. 36. [g] John xi. 26. [h] Gal. vi. 2.

covenant, but not to it as a rule. To be under the law as a rule of life, is the privilege only of believers, who are already justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and who are thereby placed for ever, beyond the reach of condemnation [i]. The law as a rule, cannot justify believers for their obedience to it, for they were perfectly justified in the sight of God, *before* they began their course of sincere obedience; and besides, their obedience is far from being perfect. Neither can it condemn them to eternal wrath, for their disobedience; for, in their justification, they were delivered from condemnation, *before* they began, strictly speaking, to disobey it. It can indeed adjudge them, to endure the painful effects of *paternal* anger; but not, to suffer the direful effects of *avenging* wrath [k]. The law as a rule, can direct and bind believers even to perfect obedience; but it cannot, either justify them to eternal life, or condemn them to eternal death. Their title to eternal life, and their security from eternal death, have been merited for them, by the obedience and death of the last Adam; and they are secured to them, by his intercession. This consideration should endear exceedingly, the holy law as a rule of duty, to the true believer; and should constrain him, to rejoice in the thought that he *is bound*, and in the prospect that, to all eternity he *shall be bound*, by the authority of it, to perfect and perpetual obedience [l].

Hence also it is evident, that the *main* reason

[i] Rom. viii. 1. [k] John v. 24.
[l] Psal. cxix. 77. Rev. xxii. 3.

why many true believers have but *little holiness* of heart and life, is, That they have *much of a legal spirit*, still remaining in them. It is only with their renewed nature, that they obey, or are capable of obeying, the law as a rule. Their unrenewed nature, still cleaves to the law as a covenant. In proportion, then, to the degree of corruption remaining in them, is that of their legal or old covenant-spirit; and the more this prevails in them, the less holy they are. Evangelical or true holiness is, a conformity of heart and life, *not* to the law as a covenant of works, but to it as a rule of life, standing in the covenant of grace. Although believers, as we said above, are *wholly* delivered from the dominion of the covenant of works, as a *rightful* sovereign; yet, many times, it is permitted to reenter their consciences, and to *usurp* authority over them. At such times, it will venture, either to promise eternal life to them, for their obedience, or to threaten eternal death to them, for their disobedience. Now, in exact proportion to the degree of their legal temper, they are disposed, to hearken to the voice of the law in their consciences; and as far as, they regard the *usurped* authority of the law as a covenant of works, they so far, disregard the *high* authority and obligation of it as a rule of duty. Believer, you cannot advance in holy conformity to the law as a rule, but in proportion as you, by the Spirit, do mortify your legal temper. You may be eminently strict, exact, and uniform, in your *external* performance of *every* duty; but in as far as a legal spirit prevails, and influences your performance of them, they are so far unholy, and unacceptable to God. He will ac-

cept nothing of any of your works, but that which is done from evangelical principles, and in an evangelical manner. Nothing will more effectually, retard your progress in true holiness, than, either to hope that, you shall obtain heaven for your works of obedience, or to fear that, you shall be cast into hell for your sins. If you trust to your habits of grace, rather than to the fulness of grace in Christ; if you derive your comfort, rather from your lively frames, and religious attainments, than from Christ and the promises; and if you make, either the good dispositions implanted in you, or the good works performed by you, the ground of your right to trust daily in Him for salvation, instead of trusting in him, upon the ample warrant afforded you, by the offers and calls of the gospel;—by doing so, you will assuredly decline from holy and cheerful obedience, to the law as a rule of life. If instead of coming always as a *sinner*, to the compassionate Saviour, and placing *direct* confidence in him, for salvation to yourself in particular, you refuse to trust in him, except when you can bring some good qualification or work with you, to recommend you to him; you cannot advance in that holy obedience to his law, which is the obedience of faith [m].

It is no less manifest from what has been said, That the state to which, believers are advanced upon their vital union with Christ, is so far from being a state of liberty to commit sin, that it is a state in which, they are laid under the *highest possible obligations even to perfect obedience.* If all

[m] Rom. xvi. 26.

men are bound to keep the commandments of God, because he is Jehovah; the redeemed are especially, and still more firmly, bound to yield all obedience to them, because he is not only Jehovah, but is besides, *their* God and Redeemer. None are under such high and strong obligations, to holiness of heart and life, as the ransomed of the Lord are. He is their God in covenant, and this lays them under the firmest ties, to be his obedient, his holy people. He is their almighty and gracious Redeemer; and, therefore, they are not their own but His, and are infinitely bound "to glorify him, in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are his[n]." Why do the saints bitterly bewail, the strength of their corruptions, and the weakness of their graces; the innumerable sins of which they have been guilty, and the want of perfect conformity to the holy law, of which they are sensible? Is it not, because they feel their infinite obligations, not to sincere merely, but even to perfect obedience? And why do they, in their exercise of evangelical repentance, loathe themselves in their own sight, for their iniquities and their abominations[o]? Do they it not, because they are enabled, to account their *want* of that *perfect* conformity to the law, to which they are bound, an *abominable defect?* The wonderful grace of God, displayed in their justification, and deliverance from the law as a covenant of works; instead of leaving them at liberty to continue in sin, disposes and powerfully constrains them, to "depart from all iniquity," and to advance resolutely, in universal obedience

[n] 1 Cor. vi. 20. [o] Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

to the law as a rule of life.—There is not a true believer in the world, who does not know this by experience.

What has been advanced, may also serve to throw some light on the doctrine of *vowing* to the Lord, and of the *obligation*, which arises from a *lawful* vow. Believers are far from being left at liberty, to vow or not to vow, as they please. They are expressly commanded to vow to God, and also to perform their vows. "Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God[p]." "Pay thy vows unto the Most High[q]." It is clear from the Context, that the vows mentioned in this last passage, are not legal and ceremonial, but spiritual or moral vows; vows, which believers in all ages of the church, are bound, both to make and to perform. Isaiah, when predicting the conversion of multitudes in New-Testament-times, and especially in the millennial period of the church, says, "The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it[r]." Accordingly, the venerable Assembly at Westminister, teach, 'That vowing unto God, is a duty required in the second commandment of the moral law[s].' All *true* converts, in every age of the church, dedicate themselves, and all that they are, and have, and do, to the Lord; and in doing so, they either expressly, or implicitly, vow to him; that is to say, they solemnly *purpose* and *promise*, That in dependance on promised grace, or, that in as far as the Lord Jesus will according to his

[p] Psal. lxxvi. 11.
[q] Psal. l. 14.
[r] Isa. xix. 21.
[s] Larg. Cat. Quest. 108.

promises, enable them, they shall, all the days of their life, yield *sincere* and *increasing* obedience, to his holy law as the rule of their duty. They do not engage or promise, to yield *perfect* obedience, in their present state of imperfection, or to perform so much as a single duty, in the strength of grace already received; but—to perform, in the strength of that grace which is promised, and which they trust will be given them, all *necessary* duties. This is not a particular, but a general vow. Neither is it a legal and ceremonial, but a spiritual and moral vow. It is the believer's *baptismal* vow, which, if opportunities be afforded, he will be sure, willingly, explicitly, and frequently, to renew at the Table of the Lord. Now, from this vow, or promissory oath, arises an *obligation* on the believer, to do as he has said. He vows to perform nothing, but what he was previously under the firmest obligations possible, to perform: and therefore, though his vow cannot add to the authority of God in his law, nor, strictly speaking, *strengthen* those obligations to obedience, which are already as strong as it is possible for them, at the time, to be; yet, it is the source of a *new*, a *distinct* and a *superadded* obligation. It is not, indeed, a *primary* source of obligation to obedience, like those mentioned above; but still, it lays the believer under a new, and a distinct, obligation to fulfil his engagement. He engages or obliges himself, by his own voluntary act, to perform sincerely all those duties, to which he is already bound by the law. And the oftener he repeats his vow, the obligation arising from it, becomes the firmer. If a lawful vow, with respect to things *indifferent*, founds

an obligation, as generally seems to be allowed; much more, surely, must a lawful vow, concerning *necessary duties*, be binding. The new obligation to necessary duties, arising from a deliberate and solemn vow to perform them, is not in the least, inconsistent with those high obligations to them, which flow from the other sources already explained. It is, indeed, associated with these obligations; but it is no disparagement to them. Should any still be disposed to question, if a lawful vow respecting moral duties, can found a new and distinct obligation to perform them; I would only add that, It either lays the believer who makes it, under a *new* obligation, or it does not. There can be no medium here. If it lay him under an obligation, it must be an obligation posterior to those considered above, and therefore, a new and distinct one. If it lay him under *no* obligation, it will follow, that lawful vows do not bind: if they do not bind or impose an obligation, they cannot be broken; and if so, the saints in all ages, have acted an unwise, yea, and a superstitious part, when they have confessed, and bitterly bewailed, their breach of vows. Many professors of religion in our day, seem unwilling to vow to the Lord; for fear that, by the breach of vows, they should increase the number of their sins. But this discovers, both a want of knowledge, and a want of sincerity. Henry, in commenting on Isaiah xlv. 23. says well, 'If the heart be brought into obedience to Christ, and made willing in the day of his power, --- the tongue will swear to him, will lay a bond upon the soul, to engage it for ever to him; for he that bears an honest mind, doth never startle at assurances.'

In conclusion: Believers are under every obligation, not only to obedience to the Divine law, but *to free and voluntary obedience.* They are bound to yield such obedience, as *cannot* be performed under the law as a covenant of works, as cannot be performed from the principle, either of slavish fear, or of servile hope. They are under the strongest ties, to yield voluntary obedience to the law as a rule of life. They are firmly *bound,* but it is to *free* obedience; to the obedience, not of slaves or hirelings, but of sons and daughters. The Lord Jesus says in his law, to them, as on a particular occasion, he did to his disciples, "Freely ye have received, freely give[t]." He, with *infinite willingness,* obeyed the law as a covenant for them; in order that they by his grace, might with sincere, and in due time with perfect willingness, obey it as a rule. The law as a rule of life to believers, has, as was said above, no threatening of eternal death, and no promise of eternal life, annexed to it. No obedience, therefore, is suitable to it, but that which is *free* and *voluntary,* proceeding from love to God, delight in his will, and concern for his glory. In proportion, accordingly, as the saints are enabled, to believe the astonishing love of God with application to themselves, and to contemplate the infinitely free grace, manifested in redeeming them from the broken covenant of works, and in bringing them under the law of the hand of Christ; they yield free and unconstrained obedience to this law. Made "a willing people in the day of the Redeemer's power," they obey willingly, and that, not from legal, but from

[t] Matth. x. 8.

evangelical motives. They study to do what the Lord requires, because He commands them, and in order to please and honour Him. They hate all manner of sin, because it is hateful in itself, and because He hates it. With holy abhorrence, they forsake iniquity, because He forbids it, and in order that, they may not displease or dishonour Him. And though their obedience will not be absolutely free, till it be absolutely perfect; yet the freeness of it, will always be in exact proportion to the strength and frequency, of their actings of faith and love.—When a man is *habitually* attentive to the *manner*, as well as to the matter, of every act of obedience; it is a good evidence, that he is dead to the law as a covenant, and is brought under the obligation of it as a rule; that the law as a covenant, is begun to be erased from his heart, and the law as a rule, to be written on it.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE NATURE, NECESSITY, AND DESERT OF GOOD WORKS.

Good works are such actions or deeds, as are commanded in the law of God as a rule of life. An action is a good work in the view of men, when it is *materially* good; that is, when the matter of it, appears agreeable to the letter of the law, and when it is profitable, either to the individual himself who performs it, or to any other. But nothing

is a good work in the sight of God, except it be *formally*, as well as materially good. While the matter of it must accord to the letter, the form must in some degree, correspond to the spirit of the holy law. No man, whilst he is under the law as a covenant of works, can do a single action that is *formally* good. He must be a true believer, justified by faith, dead to the law as a covenant, under the law as a rule, and "created in Christ Jesus to good works;" before he can perform the smallest action, that will be good and acceptable in the sight of God[u]. Good works cannot be done, but in obedience to the law in the hand of the Mediator, as an authoritative rule of conduct; and cannot be performed, but by persons, who are vitally united to Him as the last Adam, and who have communion with him, in his righteousness and fulness[w]. A man, in order to perform the smallest good work, must be justified on the ground of the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and therefore, his good works arrive too late, to form any part of his justifying righteousness. As it is impossible for a man, to be justified in the sight of God, by the works of the law *before* conversion; so it is equally impossible for him, to be justified by his good works *after* it. Good works will, indeed, justify the believer's profession of faith, before men; but not his person, before God. Such works, not being performed under the law as a covenant, and at the same time, not being perfect, cannot enter into the *ground* of his justification; but, they manifest him to have

[u] Rom. v. 6. [w] John xv. 5.

true faith, and to be already justified by faith; and so, they evidence his profession of faith before men, to be sincere[x]. As good works are strictly enjoined in the law of God, and as it is of the highest importance to the honour of God, and also to the advancement of holiness and comfort, in believers themselves, that they understand well the *nature*, the *necessity*, and the *desert*, of such works, I shall here consider briefly, each of these in order.

Sect. I. *Of the nature of good works.*

Holiness of life, or the constant practice of good works, proceeds from that holiness of heart, which is imparted to elect sinners, in regeneration and sanctification; and it consists in their conformity of life, to the law as a rule of duty. The habitual and constant performance of good works, is the same as holiness of life; and it is the distinguishing character of every adult person, who so believes in the Lord Jesus, as to have the beginnings of eternal life.—Here it will be necessary, briefly to point out, What it is that constitutes an action, a *good* work in the sight of God, the omniscient and sovereign Judge of all.

Much more is requisite for this purpose, than merely a good *intention*. A man may, in his actions, propose to himself a good end, or may have an apparently good intention to serve, whilst yet, he is ignorant of the holiness and spirituality of the Divine law[y]. Many, with what has appeared to themselves, to be the best intention, have done, and

[x] Gal. ii. 16. Philip. iii. 9. James ii. 24.
[y] 1 Tim. i. 7.

still do, things which are *expressly* forbidden in the holy law of God[z]. The sovereign authority of God in his law, obliges men to regulate, not only their ends of acting, but their principles, inclinations, and the matter and manner of their actions, by that Divine standard[a]. The following things especially, are requisite to constitute our works of obedience, *good* works:

1. They must be such as are *required in the law* of God, and be performed in *obedience to his holy will*, expressed in the precepts of his law. "He that keepeth the commandment, keepeth his own soul[b]." "He that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever[c]." The law of God is the revelation of his sovereign will, and therefore, it is the authoritative rule of our obedience. No action, then, is a good work, except it be performed agreeably to his will, and as an act of obedience to his commands.

2. They cannot be accounted good works, unless they be *raised on a good foundation.* Our works cannot be good, unless they be works of new and evangelical obedience; and this they cannot possibly be, except they be built on a new and evangelical foundation. Good works cannot stand, but on a good or an evangelical ground; namely, the doctrines, offers, invitations, and promises of the gospel, and especially, the glorious doctrine of justification, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed, and received by faith; as also the holy law, in consequence of the second Adam's fulfilling

[z] John xvi. 2.
[a] Deut. xii. 32. Mark xii. 30, 31.
[b] Prov. xix. 16.
[c] 1 John ii. 17.

of it, divested of its federal form to believers, and in and by Him, given them, as the only and immutable rule of their new obedience. "If ye *know* these things," said our Lord to his disciples, "happy are ye if ye do them[d]." And the apostle Paul, "These things," namely, the things mentioned in the immediately preceding context, "I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have *believed* in God, might be careful to maintain good works[e]."

3. It is also requisite that they *flow from evangelical principles*. They cannot be spiritually good, nor acceptable to God, except they proceed from good principles of action. But no principles are good, unless they be evangelical. It is not sufficient for this purpose, that our performances be barely *moral*, as many of the actions of Heathens were; they must be evangelical and holy likewise. They must flow from such evangelical principles as these:—A soul regenerated by the quickening Spirit of Christ; a mind enlightened with the saving knowledge of Christ, and of the truth as it is in Him; union with Christ, and with God in him, by a living faith; communion with Christ in his righteousness and fulness, and with God in him; a conscience sprinkled with his justifying, and peace-speaking blood; and a heart sanctified and comforted by his Holy Spirit[f]. They must proceed more immediately, from principles and habits of faith, hope, and love, in a sanctified soul. "Without *faith*, it is impossible to please God[g]."

[d] John xiii 17.
[e] Tit. iii. 8.
[f] Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. Matth. xii. 35.
[g] Heb. xi. 6.

"Every man that hath this *hope* in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure[h]." "This is the *love* of God, that we keep his commandments[i]."

4. We must be excited to the performance of them, by *evangelical motives only*. To render our works spiritually good, it is not enough that they proceed from good principles: they must, moreover, be influenced by good motives, deeply affecting and determining our hearts; such as these:—The astonishing love and grace of God, manifested in his gospel[k]; the sovereign authority, and will of God, as our covenant-God and Father, declared in his law as the rule of our duty[l]; our deliverance from condemnation, and the ample security from eternal death, which the blood of Christ affords us[m]; the promise and the hope of "eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord[n];" and the perfect pattern of good works, which Christ has proposed for our imitation[o]."

5. Another requisite is, that they be *performed in a special manner*. It is necessary that the manner, as well as the matter, of our works, be spiritually good and acceptable to God. The manner of performing them must be evangelical, suited to the state, the privileges, and the prospects of believers. They cannot be good works, except they be performed inwardly, as well as outwardly; for "the law is spiritual," and it requires the obedience of the whole heart, as well as of the whole life.

[h] 1 John iii. 3. [i] 1 John v. 3. [k] 1 John iv. 19. [l] 1 Thess. iv. 3. Exod. xx. 2, 3. 2 Cor. v. 14. [m] 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. i. 17—19. [n] Tit. i. 2. Rom. vi. 23. [o] 1 Pet. ii. 21. Heb. xii. 1—3.

They must, in order to their being good works, be performed, in the exercise of trusting with firm confidence, that Christ will, every moment, afford us grace, to enable us to perform them acceptably[p]; in the exercise of a lively hope[q]; in the exercise of supreme love to Christ, and to God in him[r]; in the exercise of adoring gratitude to the Lord, for all his benefits bestowed and promised[s]; and in the exercise also, of evangelical contrition and humiliation; counting ourselves, utterly "unworthy of the least of all his mercies[t]," and indebted wholly to his sovereign grace, for all our salvation[u]. They are good works, only in proportion as they are performed, in the *exercise* of spiritual graces, and in the *strength* of promised grace.

6. Once more: It is no less requisite, that we *propose to ourselves good ends* in performing them. The ends, which we propose to ourselves in the practice of them, must be evangelical, as well as our principles, motives, and manner. They cannot be accounted *good* works, except our chief or ultimate end in doing them, be the glory of God in Christ, as our God[w]. Nor is it sufficient for this purpose, that in them, we *virtually* and habitually intend the glory of God: it will be necessary that, in performing *each* of them, we *actually* aim at the glory of his holy name, as our highest end. It is also requisite, that in our practice of them, we have it ever in view, in subordination to the

[p] 1 Tim. i. 5. Philip. iv. 13. Heb. xi. 6.
[q] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.
[r] 1 Tim. i. 5. Rom. xiii. 10.
[s] Psal. cxvi. 12—14.
[t] Gen. xxxii. 10.
[u] Eph. ii. 8—10.
[w] 1 Cor. x. 31.

manifested glory of God, to advance in conformity of heart and of life, to our great Redeemer[x]; to embrace every opportunity of doing good to all around us[y]; and to prepare for the full and everlasting enjoyment of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as our infinite portion[z].

Now the performances of real Christians have, in a higher or lower degree, *all* these requisites; and therefore they are, strictly speaking, *good* works. The depravity that remains in the hearts of believers, hinders, indeed, their works from being *perfectly* good; but it cannot prevent them from being truly or spiritually good, and "acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." The good Spirit of God, dwells in all the saints, and "works in them, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure[a]." He has begun, and he promotes, a good work of grace in their hearts; and from this, proceed all good works of obedience in their lives[b]. But, seeing their best actions are not yet perfectly good, they ought so to increase and "abound in every good work," as constantly to press on toward perfection in holiness. They are commanded to increase more and more, in the strength and liveliness of their spiritual graces, and in the zealous and diligent performance of their necessary duties[c].

[x] 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Philip. iii. 10—14.
[y] Matth. v. 16. [z] Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.
[a] Philip. ii. 13. [b] Philip. i. 6.
[c] 2 Pet. iii. 18. 1 Thess. iv. 1.

SECT. II. *Of the* NECESSITY *of good works.*

IN this Section, I shall, first, endeavour to shew, for what purposes, good works are *not* necessary; and next, in what respects, or for what ends, they *are* necessary.

In the first place, I am to shew, for what purposes they are *not* necessary.

1. Good works are not necessary, to *move God to be merciful and gracious* to us. They are not needful, to recommend us so to the favour of God, as to *excite* his compassion and good will to us, or to produce the smallest change in his intentions concerning us. The change to be promoted by the continued practice of good works, will be only in ourselves. It cannot be in God. "He is in one mind, and who can turn him?" He is Jehovah, he changeth not. Our holy performances, do not render God more willing than he is already, to shew mercy, or give grace to us; but they are means of rendering ourselves more and more willing, to receive his mercy and his grace. We must, then, never depend on our own good works, but always on the spotless righteousness of Christ, and on the gracious promises of God, for all the effects of his mercy and favour.

2. Our good works are not necessary, to *afford us a right to trust in Christ* for salvation. They cannot obtain for us, a right to believe in the Lord Jesus; nor is it requisite that they should. The commandment of the law, to believe in the name of Jesus Christ[d], together with the offers, invita-

[d] 1 John iii. 23.

tions, and promises of the gospel, affords us all the right or warrant that is requisite, to come as sinners to the Saviour, and to place the confidence of our hearts in him, for his whole salvation. These afford to us, in common with all the other hearers of the gospel, a full right, as sinners of mankind, to approach, and, with the firmest confidence to trust in him; and, therefore, we have no need to procure by our performances, the smallest degree of right to come to him [e]. Our good works are necessary for other purposes, but not for this. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*," and "not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance." We must, therefore, approach and trust in Him as *sinners* utterly unworthy of him; and that, without looking for any good qualities or works of our own, either to recommend us to his regard, or to entitle us to trust that he will save us.—How can our good works be necessary, to afford us a right to trust in the Saviour, when we must begin to trust in him, *before* we can perform the smallest good work?

3. Neither are good works necessary, to *acquire for us, a personal interest in Christ.* So far are they from being requisite to merit, or so much as to *obtain* for us, a saving interest in Jesus Christ; that our being previously interested in Him, is indispensably necessary to our being capable of performing, so much as the very smallest of them [f]. Good works, then, can have no place, in procuring for us a personal interest in the Saviour. It is necessary to qualify us for *them;* but they are not

[e] Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. [f] Eph. i. 6. John xv. 5.

necessary to confer on us, a right to *it*. They are indeed an evidence of it, but not a procuring cause: they follow upon it, but do not go before it. They can have no existence before it; and therefore, they can neither entitle us to it, nor qualify us for the reception of it. A personal interest in Christ, must either be received as a gift of sovereign grace, by faith only, or not received at all. Many convinced sinners err greatly in this matter. They hope that, their reformations, their frames, and their performances, will so recommend them to God, as to procure for them, a saving interest in the person and work of Christ. Thus, they themselves, try to *begin* the work of their salvation, and then, to trust that the Saviour will help it forward. But this is, to "seek righteousness not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, and to stumble at that stumbling-stone[s]." No man can attain a saving interest in Christ, until he be made willing, to receive it as a gift of infinitely free grace.

4. Goods works are not requisite, to *acquire for us, a right to increasing degrees of sanctification.* We ought, indeed, to employ them diligently, as means of growing in habits of grace; but we must not hence conclude, that they are needful to *procure* for us, a title to those influences of sanctifying grace, which are every moment requisite, for increasing our habits of grace, and exciting them to exercise. They are necessary as means, and also as evidences, but not as procuring causes, of progressive holiness. It is not the good fruit, that

[s] Rom. ix. 32.

makes the tree good; but, on the contrary, it is the good tree, that produces the good fruit. It is not the good works of believers, but the infinitely perfect righteousness of the second Adam, that entitles them to increasing holiness, both of heart and life. And therefore, while they ought to be diligent and zealous, in performing all good works; they must not presume to place the least dependance on their performance of them, for a title to continued supplies, either of sanctifying, or of comforting grace. Instead of trusting to their own endeavours, for a continued increase of inherent holiness, their duty is, to rely on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for their *whole* title to it. They ought to rely on his surety-righteousness, as much, for a title to sanctification, as for a right to justification. It is by faith in the Lord Jesus, as their "righteousness and strength," that they are sanctified, as well as justified[h]. While then they trust constantly in Christ himself for continual supplies of sanctifying grace; they must, instead of depending on their own works, rely daily on his righteousness alone, for *all their title* to those supplies. Though good works are indispensably necessary, *in* them who are sanctified; yet they are so far from being requisite to procure for the saints, a title to progressive sanctification, that these could not perform so much as one of them, till *after* they began to be sanctified.

5. Once more: Good works have no place in *obtaining for the saints, a right to eternal life in heaven.* "Eternal life is the *gift* of God, through

[h] Acts xv. 9. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Col. ii. 12.

Jesus Christ our Lord." It is "a purchased possession;" purchased for all his spiritual seed, by the obedience unto death of the second Adam. It is an inheritance, which He "the heir of all things," bequeaths to them, and of which they attain possession, not on the ground of their own good works, but by union and communion with Him. It is not their own good deeds, but his righteousness, that is meritorious of eternal life for them. "Not by works of righteousness which *we have done*," says the apostle Paul, "but according to his mercy he saved us[i]." It is Christ only, who "hath obtained eternal redemption" for believers[k]. They are accepted as righteous in the sight of God, and entitled to eternal life, not for their own good works, but 'only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and received by faith alone.' It is "by the righteousness of *one*," that grace, or "the free gift, comes upon all men who believe, unto justification of life:" For, --- "by the obedience of *one*, shall many be made righteous[l]." Were the good works of believers, to entitle them in the smallest degree to salvation, their salvation would, in the same degree, be of *debt* to them, and not of grace. But it is not by any merit of theirs, but by the sovereign grace of God, that they are saved[m]." Besides, if their good works, afforded them a right or claim to eternal life, it would inevitably follow, That they could not have a right to it, till *after* they had performed them *all*. But the infinitely perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, gives them

[i] Tit. iii. 5.
[k] Heb. ix. 12.
[l] Rom. v. 18, 19.
[m] Eph. ii. 8, 9.

in their justification, a complete right to life eternal, and that *before* they begin to do one good work[n]. Indeed believers, although they could perform even perfect obedience, could yet yield no degree of obedience, but what they *owed* to the Lord; and therefore, even their *perfect* obedience, could not merit the least favour from Him. And as their good works, can give them no meritorious right to eternal life; so neither can they afford them a *pactional* title to it: for, by the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to them, they have already, both the *one* right, and the *other*, and that in the *highest possible* degree. Though good works then are not necessary, in order to procure or obtain, a *right* to eternal salvation; yet, they are the necessary *duties* of all, who are justified and entitled to that salvation. They are the *consequences*, of salvation already procured; and they are the *antecedents*, which prepare believers for the salvation to be still attained. At the same time, however, they are not *causes* of obtaining the possession, either of the beginning, or the progress, or the consummation of salvation. They are indispensably necessary, IN all adult persons who shall be saved; but not necessary, to *obtain* or acquire salvation. Believers are saved, not by their good works, but TO them, as effects, and evidences, of their salvation already begun. These words of the apostle Paul, "They do it to *obtain* a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible," will not prove, that good works are necessary to *obtain* eternal salvation: for the verb in the Orignal, pro-

[n] Rom. iv. 4—6.

perly signifies, To *receive*, or *apprehend*[o]; and, it is so rendered by our Translators, in the immediately preceding verse. Believers are not saved, either *by* their works, or *for* them, or *according to* them. Not *by* them; "Not BY works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, &c.[oo]." Not *for* them; Not FOR your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you[p]." Not *according to* them; "He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not ACCORDING TO our works, but according to his own purpose and grace[pp]." Men are, indeed, to be judged according to their works; but are not to be saved according to them. The rule of judgement will be the law; but the rule of salvation will be the gospel.

I proceed now, as was proposed, to shew, In what respects, or for what important purposes, good works *are indispensably requisite.*

1. They are necessary, as just *acknowledgments* of God's sovereign authority over believers, and as *acts of obedience* to his righteous commands. "For this is the *will* of God," says an Apostle, "even our sanctification[q]." The infinite Majesty of heaven, hath not laid aside his right of dominion over believers, by affording them deliverance from condemnation, and a right to eternal life; but on the contrary, hath, in that wonderful way, laid them under additional obligations to "holiness in all manner of conversation." The glorious liberty to which he has called them, is given them for this purpose, "That they may serve him without fear,

[o] 1 Cor. ix. 25. [oo] Tit. iii 5. [p] Ezek. xxxvi. 32.
[pp] 2 Tim. i. 9. [q] 1 Thess. iv, 3.

in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life[qq]." He has delivered them from the law as a covenant, for this very end, That, according to the law as a rule, "they might serve him in newness of spirit," and "be careful to maintain good works." The sovereign *will* of God as the supreme rule of duty, is expressed in his commands; and therefore, universal and perpetual obedience to them, is necessary.

2. Good works are indispensably requisite, as being one special *end of the election, redemption, regeneration, and effectual vocation*, of the objects of God's everlasting love. They are one design of the *election* of sinners. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath chosen us in him," says the apostle Paul, "that we should be *holy*, and without blame before him in love[r]." They are also one end of the *redemption* of elect sinners. For the same Apostle says, "Christ gave himself for us, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works[s]." They are one of the designs too, of the *regeneration* of God's elect. "We are his workmanship," says our Apostle, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them[t]." Good works, are the native and necessary operations of a regenerate and sanctified soul. Grace in the heart, is a living, an operative, principle of holiness in the life. Good works are likewise one of the ends to be attained, by their *effectual vocation*. "As he which hath called you is holy," says

[qq] Luke i. 74, 75. [r] Eph. i. 4. [s] Tit. ii. 14.
[t] Eph. ii. 10.

the apostle Peter, "so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [u]."

3. Good works are also necessary, inasmuch as they are one *great design of the gospel*, and of *the ordinances and providential dispensations* of the Lord. As for the *gospel*, it is "the mystery of godliness [w];" "the doctrine which is according to godliness [x]." The doctrine of the gospel, is not speculative merely; it is also transforming and practical. It is not only the instrument of enlightening the mind, but also of renovating the will, and of rectifying the affections, of the soul. In the hand of the Holy Spirit, it is a fire which penetrates, warms, softens, quickens, purifies, and cemforts the heart. It is a light which assimilates [y], and truth which sanctifies [z]. It is also "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which, by making believers free from the law of sin and death," brings them "under the law to Christ [a]." The design too of the *ordinances* of the gospel, is, That sinners may be converted to the love and practice of holiness; and that saints may be enabled "to abound more and more in every good word and work." This is the design likewise, of all *providential dispensations* to the children of God. If they be favoured with prosperity, it is, that the goodness of God, may constrain them to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" or, if they be visited with adversity, it is, "that it may yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them [b]."

4. It is indispensably requisite that believers per-

[u] 1 Pet. i. 15. [w] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [x] 1 Tim. vi. 3.
[y] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [z] John xvii. 17. [a] 1 Cor. ix. 21.
[b] Heb. xii. 11.

form good works, as *expressions of gratitude* to their God and Saviour, for all his inestimable benefits vouchsafed to them. They are bound to be always grateful and thankful to the Lord, for his great goodness to them, in creation, in providence, and especially in redemption. It is "he who has made them, and not they themselves." He has preserved them amidst innumerable dangers, and has liberally supplied their various wants. He has distinguished them from all others of the sons of men, by the greatness of their privileges, and the inestimable value of their enjoyments; by the innumerable instances of his kindness, and the rich abundance of his favours. He has also, in the immensity of his love, sent his only begotten Son, to redeem them to himself by his blood, and to merit for them, the full and endless fruition of Himself, in the mansions of bliss. Moreover, he has sent his Holy Spirit to dwell in them, to apply redemption to them, and by his sanctifying and comforting influences, to prepare them for every good work, and to advance them to the full enjoyment of eternal life. How boundless, then, how inexpressible, is the debt of adoring gratitude which they owe, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit! Now, what does the Lord require of them, in return for all his benefits? Nothing but that, they should "be ready to every good work," and be "zealous for good works." Having been bought with a price of infinite value, they are no more their own, but are indispensably bound, "to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit, which are his," by a spiritual, universal, and cheerful obedience to Him. It is the will of their sovereign Benefactor, that they express their gratitude

to Him, for the inestimable blessings of his grace, by taking *pleasure* in keeping all his commandments, and by shewing themselves "*patterns* of good works[c]."

5. Good works are no less necessary, as they are *our walking in the way* which leads to heaven. Jesus Christ "is the way[d]." Faith and holiness are, our walking in him as the way. This way, accordingly, is called, "The way of holiness, *or*, The holy way[e];" inasmuch as none can walk in Christ, otherwise than by faith, and by that holiness of heart and life, which is "the obedience of faith." As no man can arrive at heaven, but by Christ, so "without holiness," or walking in Him, "no man shall see the Lord[f]." None is in the way to heaven, but he who, by a life of faith, and the practice of those good works which are the fruits of faith, is advancing toward perfection of holiness. It is the order immutably fixed in the everlasting covenant, That a man be made holy in heart and in life, before he be admitted to see and enjoy God, in his holy place on high. The love and practice of good works, then, in one who has an opportunity of performing them, are necessary, as *appointed means* of disposing or preparing him, for the holy enjoyments, and employments, of the heavenly sanctuary. The redeemed, therefore, who are in the way to the celestial city, are "zealous for good works," and "fruitful in every good work[g]."

6. They are also indispensably requisite, in order to *evidence and confirm the faith* of the saints.

[c] Tit. ii. 7. [d] John xiv. 6. [e] Isa. xxxv. 8.
[f] Heb. xii. 14. [g] Col. i. 10.

Wherever a living and a saving faith is, good works are, in every adult believer, the native fruits and proper *evidences* of it. "Shew me," says the apostle James, "thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith *by* my works [h]." Sincere obedience is the necessary consequence, and therefore a necessary evidence, of justifying and saving faith. Good works are "works of faith," works performed in faith, and proceeding from it as the living principle of them. Whatever seeming evidences of true faith, then, a man may have, they are all to be regarded as counterfeit and delusive, if he do not, at the same time, love and practise good works. Such works do not only evidence a living faith, but they also *encourage* the believer resolutely to persevere in renewing his exercise of faith; and, so, they prove means of *confirming* his faith.

7. Good works are necessary to believers, for making *their calling and election sure to them.* Although such works, afford a man no right to eternal salvation; yet they are an infallible proof to him, that he has a personal interest in it, and a sure title to it. They, under the witnessing of the Holy Spirit, supply the believer with arguments, which, not only serve to confirm his assurance of faith, but to increase his assurance of personal interest, in Christ and his great salvation. "Hereby we do know that we know him," says the beloved disciple, "if we keep his commandments." "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him [i]." To the same purpose the apostle Peter

[h] James ii. 18. [i] John ii. 3, 5.

says, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall [k]." Without the diligent performance of good works, no believer can attain assurance of his personal interest in eternal salvation, far less, establishment in that assurance.

8. Good works are indispensably requisite, for the *maintenance or continuance*, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Though such works, are not procuring causes of spiritual peace and joy; yet, as fruits of righteousness imputed, and fruits of faith, they always accompany that peace and joy, which issue from the lively exercise of faith [l]. The consolation, which flows from the vigorous exercise of an appropriating faith, and from cheering discoveries of personal interest in the covenant of grace, cannot be retained, without unwearied diligence in the exercise of spiritual graces, and in the performance of good works. If believers would know by experience, that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace [m];" and if they would enjoy a continued sense of redeeming love, and a sweet foretaste of heavenly felicity; they must be habitually careful, not only to maintain, but to be rich in good works.

9. Good works are no less needful, in order to

[k] 2 Pet. i. 5—7, 10. [l] Psal. cxix. 165. 2 Cor. i. 12.
[m] Prov. iii. 17.

adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and *our profession* of that holy and heavenly doctrine. The apostle Paul gave this charge to Titus, "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things[n]." Believers cannot otherwise be a credit to the gospel, and to their holy profession of it, than by a cheerful, and diligent, performance of every good work. It is only, by the love and practice of universal holiness, that thy can strike a conviction of the holiness, excellence, and efficacy, of the gospel of God our Saviour, on the consciences of hardened sinners around them. No other practice, than that of good works in all their variety, becomes the gospel of Christ. It is only "the beauty of holiness," that is suitable and ornamental to his glorious gospel. If believers, then, would not afford occasion to the enemies of the Lord Jesus, to blaspheme his glorious name, to speak evil of the way of truth, and to conclude that, all who profess faith and holiness, are hypocrites and imposters, they must "diligently follow every good work." "If, while men seek to be justified by Christ, they themselves also are found sinners;" this reflects much dishonour on our great Redeemer, and makes "Him the minister of sin[o]."

10. Good works are also requisite to *stop the mouths* of wicked men, and to *prevent offence*. "For so is the *will* of God," says an Apostle,

[n] Tit. ii. 9, 10. [o] Gal. ii. 17.

"that with well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.[p]" They are necessary likewise, to gain over unbelievers, and other enemies of the truth, and to recommend faith and holiness to their esteem. It is, by the faithful and cheerful performance of every good work, that believers commend the Lord Jesus, and the way of truth and holiness to the consciences of all around them.

11. They are necessary, moreover, for the *edification and comfort* of fellow Christians. Our blessed Lord, therefore, gives his disciples this high command; "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven[q]." And the apostle Paul informed the believers at Corinth, That their zeal, in contributing readily, and seasonably, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, "had provoked very many[r]." The same apostle informs us, that the doctrines of grace, and the good works to which they tend, "are good and profitable unto men[s]." Such works are highly necessary, not only for the edification and comfort of individual believers, but also for the peace, security, and glory of the church.

12. Finally, Good works are indispensably requisite, for *promoting before the world, the manifested glory* of Christ, and of God in him. The apostle Paul prayed for the believers at Philippi, "That they might be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righte-

[p] 1 Pet. i. 15. [q] Matth. v. 16. [r] 2 Cor. ix. 2.
[s] Tit. iii. 8.

ousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God[t]." The Lord Jesus said to his disciples, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit[u]." Believers then must endeavour, "whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God[w]." To this purpose it is requisite, "that they care for the things of the Lord, that they may be holy both in body and spirit, diligently following every good work[x];" and, "that they follow not that which is evil, but that which is good[y]."

These appear to be the leading purposes for which, good works are necessary: and so indispensably requisite are they, to subserve those designs; that, according to the order unalterably fixed in the covenant of grace, it will be *impossible* for the latter to be attained, without the former. Though good works, as has been observed, are not necessary out of their proper place; yet, *in* the place assigned to them, and *for* the purposes intended to be served by them, they are absolutely indispensable. No man can warrantably conclude, that he is instated in the covenant of grace, except he find, that he is disposed, and enabled, daily to perform them.

Sect. III. *Of the* desert *of good works.*

Although the good dispositions and actions of one fellow creature, *deserve* to be commended, and in some cases to be rewarded, by another; yet, no good qualities or works of mere men, can *merit* the smallest blessing or good thing, from the infinite Majesty of heaven.

[t] Philip. i. 10, 11. [u] John xv. 8. [w] 1 Cor. x. 31.
[x] 1 Cor. vii. 34. [y] 3 John ver. 11.

With respect to the works of *unregenerate* persons; they are destitute of every thing, which can render an action, "good and acceptable in the sight of God." They are not done from true *faith* as a principle[z]; nor are they performed from a principle of *love*[a]. Neither are they done by persons who are "*accepted* in the beloved[b]." They are not performed in obedience to the *will* of God, expressed in his holy law[c]; nor are they done to his *glory* as the chief end of them. All unconverted persons, are said in Scripture, to be sinners, or workers of iniquity[d]; and their works, how advantageous soever many of them may be, to themselves or others, are all, notwithstanding, represented as *sins*, in the account of an infinitely holy God[e]: for, although many of them may be materially good, yet *all* of them are *formally* evil; and therefore, they are an abomination to Him[f]. Consequently, the very best works of unregenerate persons, instead of deserving the *favour* of God, 'deserve his *wrath and curse*, both in this life, and in that which is to come.' Such works deserve eternal death, and cannot surely, at the same time, merit eternal life[g]: and yet, so deplorably ignorant and self-righteous, are unregenrate sinners; that they all rely, either wholly, or partially, on their own works, for a title to the favour of God, and even to endless felicity. Nay, so gross is their ignorance of themselves, and of the righteous law

[z] Tit. i. 15. 1 Tim. i. 5. Heb. xi. 6.
[a] Rom. viii. 7. and xiii. 10.
[b] Eph. i. 6.
[c] Zech. vii. 5. Rom. viii. 7, 8.
[d] Psal. liii. 1—4. Rom. iii. 9—19.
[e] Prov. xxi. 4. Isa. i. 13, 14.
[f] Prov. xv. 8. and xxi. 27.
[g] Rom. vi. 23.

of God, and so inveterate is their pride; that they depend on such works, not only for a *title* to eternal life, but even for *security* from that eternal death, which is already *due* to them for their innumerable sins, and to which, they are already condemned.

As for the good works of *regenerate* men; these also *cannot merit*, from the high and holy One, the smallest blessing, much less eternal life. So far as they are spiritually good, they do not, indeed, like the works of the unregenerate, deserve the wrath of God; but still they do not merit the smallest *favour* at his hand. Merit of condignity, or merit strictly so called, necessarily requires, That the works which can merit from God, such a reward as would, in strict remunerative justice, be a reward of *debt*, be performed in our *own strength*; that they be *more than we owe* to God, or more than he requires from us; that they be at least absolutely *perfect*, and that both in parts, degrees, and continuance; that their value be *equal* to that of the promised reward; and that the reward be, according to the strictest rules of justice, *due* for them. Hence it is manifest, that the very best works of the holiest of men, can merit no favour, no benefit for them, at the hand of God. The perfect works of Adam in innocence, could not merit any good thing at the hand of the Lord; much less, can the imperfect works of holy men now.

These works cannot, by their own *intrinsic value*, merit the smallest blessing from God. For, 1st, All the performances that are spiritually good, proceed from the almighty agency of the *Spirit of grace* in believers [h]. 2d, According to the precepts of his holy and righteous law, believers *owe perfect*

[h] Philip. ii. 13. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

and perpetual obedience to the Lord[i]. 3d, The very best of their works, in this world, are *far from being answerable*, to the high requirements of the holy law of God[k]. And 4th, Their best actions, suppose they were perfect, could bear no proportion to any *Divine* blessing, especially to the inestimable blessing of *eternal life*. The former, are the works of *finite* creatures: the latter, being *endless* felicity, or the eternal enjoyment of God and of the Lamb, is an *infinite* reward[l]. It is evident then, that to believers, it is wholly a reward of grace, and in no degree, a reward of debt. "The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord[m]."

As the good works of believers cannot, by their own intrinsic value, merit eternal life, or even the smallest blessing from God; so they cannot, by *paction*, procure the smallest *right*, either to the one or to the other. For, 1st, The law as a rule of life, under which believers are, is a *perfect* law of liberty; and therefore it cannot contribute to, or admit of, *pactional* merit. The man "who looketh into that perfect law of liberty, and who is a doer of the word, shall indeed be blessed *in* his deed;" but he shall not be blessed *for* it[n]. 2d, The good works of believers, during their state of imperfection, are never correspondent, in a *perfect* degree, to the law as a rule of life[o]. 3d, The

[i] Rom. viii. 12. Matth. v. 48.
[k] Isa. lxiv. 6. Gal. v. 17.
[l] Rom. viii. 18. and xi. 6.
[m] Rom. vi. 23.
[n] 1 Cor. ix. 21. James i. 25.
[o] Matth. xxii. 37—39. and v. 48. Eccles. vii. 20.

principles of faith and union with Christ, from which all the good works of believers do flow, imply that, the infinitely perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to them, which *alone* merits for them, *a complete title* to the progress, and the consummation of eternal life[p]. The infinitely spotless and meritorious righteousness of Christ, therefore, which is placed to their account, as well as the infinite grace of God, which abounds toward them, leaves *no room* for the pactional merit of their own works[q]. And 4th, We read no where in Scripture, that God ever makes a covenant or paction with believers, in which, he promises to them eternal life, or even the smallest favour, *in consideration* of their own sincere obedience. The only covenant that he makes with them, is the covenant of grace; according to which, every spiritual and temporal blessing, is wholly a gift of free and sovereign grace[r].

The good works of believers then do not, either by their own intrinsic value, or by paction, procure for them, a right to the smallest favour at the hand of God, much less to eternal life. It is only the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed to them, and received by faith alone, that merits, and so procures for them, a *complete title* to the beginning, progress, and perfection of eternal life[s].

It is evident from what has here been said, that Christ who liveth in believers, is the *only source* of

[p] 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. ii. 16, 20. Rom. v. 21.
[q] Eph. ii. 7—9. Rom. v. 16—19.
[r] Eph. ii. 8, 9.
[s] Rom. v. 21.

all their good works. He having in regeneration entered by his Spirit, "dwells in their hearts by faith," as the only fountain of holiness, the sole cause of good works. If adult persons, then, be vitally united to Christ, they will certainly be "renewed in the spirit of their minds, after his holy image," and will perform good works, as the *necessary* fruits of holiness implanted in their hearts. Where vital union with Christ is, good actions, by persons capable of them, will be the certain consequence; and where it is not, such actions cannot be performed, and it will be in vain to pretend to the practice of them. All the performances of believers, that are spiritually good, flow from Christ dwelling in their hearts by his Spirit, as a spirit of faith: and whatever works proceed not from this principle, have nothing more, than the mere appearance of good works. "Without me," saith our blessed Lord, "ye can do nothing [t]." No works are good and acceptable to God, but those which have the Spirit of Christ for their main principle, and the glory of God for their chief end. And no man is "careful to maintain good works," but the man who has the Spirit of Christ in him, "causing him to walk in his statutes, to keep his judgments, and do them [u]." It is from the gracious work of the Spirit of Christ in the saints, that all their good works proceed. If He did not work in the heart, "both to will and to do," they could not work in the life; and if he did not "rest upon them, as the Spirit of glory and of God [w]," they could not perform a single action to the glory

[t] John xv. 5. [u] Ezek. xxxvi. 27. [w] 1 Pet. iv. 14.

of God. The only way then in which, either ministers in the gospel, or private Christians, can *effectually* promote the interest of good works, among others around them, is,—not only to exhibit a bright example of them in their own conduct, but to endeavour diligently to be instrumental, in conducting sinners to Jesus Christ, and in teaching them how to "walk in Him."

Can a man perform no good works, till *after he be justified* in the sight of God? Hence it is manifest that, they who rely on their own obedience for a title to justification, are *strangers* to good works. Their continued and avowed dependance on their own works, for a right to justification, is a sure evidence that, they have never performed a single good work: it demonstrates them to be totally destitute of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord[x]." To pretend to sanctification, and then to rely on it for justification, is, to derive the fountain from the stream, the cause from the effect, and so, to invert the order of the blessings of salvation. It is necessary that our sins be forgiven, and our persons be accepted as righteous in the sight of God, in order to our being capable of yielding the least degree of acceptable obedience to him. As long as a man is not justified, he is under the curse of the law: but how can a man, who is under the condemning sentence of the law, and consequently under the dominion of sin, perform good works? The apostle Paul informs us that, "as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse[y]." It is evident then that, as

[x] Heb. xii. 14. [y] Gal. iii. 10.

long as they rely on their own works of obedience to the law for justification, they are utterly unable, either to love, or to perform, the smallest good work. It is the distinguishing property of all *good* works, that they are performed *from*, and not *for*, justification. Oh, that secure sinners, and self-righteous formalists, would believe this; and flee speedily to the compassionate Saviour, for righteousness and strength!

The notion of a sinner's justification before God, by his own works, *is an absurdity:* it is contrary, not only to Scripture, but to reason. Every condemned sinner, being under the dominion of sin, is, as was already observed, unable to perform the smallest good work; and yet he flatters himself, either that his ability is so great, or that the conditions of his justification and salvation are so easy, that he *can*, especially with Divine assistance, fulfil them. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain[z];" and yet, while the self-righteous formalist seeks righteousness by the works of the law, he professes to believe, that the death of Christ has satisfied Divine justice for his offences. If righteousness be by the works of the law, then remission of sins is unnecessary[a]; and yet, whilst he is establishing his own righteousness for his justification, he professes to pray for the pardon of all his sins. He expects justification for the merit of his own works; and at the same time, he professes his belief, that they who are justified, are justified by grace. In a word, he professes to believe that good works follow justification, and that "without

[z] Gal. ii. 21. [a] Rom. iv. 6, 7.

faith, it is impossible to please God [b];" and after all, he depends on his own works *for* his justification, as a blessing which he expects will follow them. Ah, how inconsistent, how irrational, is the conduct of a self-righteous professor of Christianity! How plainly does it appear that, his understanding is darkened, and that, he himself is under the dominion of the prince of darkness!

Are we never to perform good works, in order to *recommend* ourselves to Christ, or to afford us a *right* to trust in him? Then how *dreadful*, is the condition of multitudes in the visible church! There are many, very many, alas! who, if they grow remiss in performing duties, or fall into open sins, begin to suspect, that Christ will not accept them; but, when they labour to mortify their lusts, and to reform their conduct, they then presume to hope, that He will receive them, and that God for his sake will accept them. Now what is this, but to hope that, they shall procure the favour of Christ, and an interest in his salvation, by their own performances; and that, his merits will render their own works so valuable, as to recommend them even to the acceptance of God. They suppose that, if they themselves but begin the work of their salvation, they may warrantably trust that, the Saviour will carry on and finish that work. Thus, they proudly and sacrilegiously presume, to divide the work, and the honour of their salvation, between Christ and themselves. This legal temper is a sure evidence, that they are under the dominion of the law of works, and that they are totally destitute of

[b] Heb. xi. 6.

evangelical holiness. It is an infallible proof, that they have no part in that salvation of the Lord Jesus, the glory of which, is to be ascribed wholly to himself, and to God in him.

We also learn from what has been advanced, That good works are to be considered, as *the fruits* of a believers being already saved, and at the same time, in subordination to the glory of God, as *the end* for which he is saved. They are the *fruits* of his being already in a state of salvation. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," says the apostle Paul, "but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, &c[c]." Here, our Apostle argues against salvation by our own works of righteousness, on this ground, that our good works are the fruits or effects, of salvation already begun in our souls. He shews that, inherent holiness, from which all our good works spring, is an essential part of our salvation; for says he, "we are saved by the washing of *regeneration* and *renewing* of the Holy Ghost." Holiness of heart, then, is a necessary *part* of salvation by Jesus Christ; and holiness of life, or our being careful to maintain good works, is the necessary *fruit*, springing from that salvation[d]. Good works are also the *end* for which believers are saved. "They are created in Christ Jesus *unto* good works[e]." The great end, in subordination to the glory of redeeming grace, for which they have been saved, or created in Christ Jesus, is, that they might perform, and per-

[c] Tit. iii. 5. Luke i. 74, 75.
[e] Eph. ii. 10.

severe in the practice of all good works. Such works, then, are so far from being grounds of title to salvation, that they are the fruits, or consequences, of being already in a state of salvation. True saints are actually, though not completely saved, and their fruits of righteousness, are the evidence of it. They are not saved by their good works, but they are saved *to* them; nor are they sanctified in order to be justified, but are justified in order to be sanctified.

The reader may hence learn, how to understand aright this proposition; 'Good works are necessary to salvation.' If the term *salvation* is, by some, and that without any warrant from the Scriptures, restricted to the *perfect blessedness* of saints in heaven; then good works, in the case of persons capable of them, *are* necessary to, or *toward* salvation. They necessarily exist before it, not indeed as procuring causes, or federal conditions, but merely as *antecedents* of it. They must of necessity go before it; inasmuch as that which, according to the covenant of grace, is first imparted to the spiritual seed of Christ, must with its genuine effects, precede that which is last of all, conferred on them. Personal and progressive holiness, is necessary to perfect holiness; and happiness begun, is requisite to happiness consummated. At the same time, I dare not say, that holiness either of heart or of life, is necessary to *procure* or *obtain* the felicity of heaven. But, if the word *salvation* be taken in its large and scriptural sense, as comprehensive, both of a state of grace in time, and of a state of glory in eternity; then good works are, properly speaking, not necessary *to* it, but necessary *in* it; as imper-

fect, they are indispensably requisite *in* a state of grace; and as perfect, they are necessary *in* a state of glory. They are needful in progressive, as well as in perfect salvation. They are indispensably requisite, in every adult person who is justified and saved. That the term salvation, ought to be taken in this comprehensive meaning, is evident from this, among other passages of Scripture: "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory[f]." Here the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, is distinguished from eternal glory.

What has been advanced, may serve to shew us the difference, or rather the opposition, between a reward of *debt*, and a reward of *grace*. In the law of works, eternal life is promised to the man who yields perfect obedience. If man had yielded this obedience, that would have been a reward of debt[g], a recompense due by stipulation, for the work done. In the gospel, the reward of eternal life, is promised to the obedient believer, not for his good works, but considered as united to Christ, in whom, he has righteousness for his justification; and in whom, all the promises of God are yea and amen. This is, indeed, a reward of debt to Christ, to whom the believer is united, and in whom he is justified; but, it is a reward of infinitely free grace, to the believer himself. It cannot be a reward of debt to the believer, and at the same time to Christ. A reward of debt is promised to the act or work; but a reward of grace, only to the agent or worker.

[f] 2 Tim. ii. 10. [g] Rom. iv. 4.

The former is adjudged, as a recompense *for* the work performed: the latter is awarded, *in* and *after* the work. If the reward be given to a man for his works of obedience, then it is not of grace, otherwise work is no more work; but if it be given him of grace, then it is not for his works, otherwise grace is no more grace[h]. If the reward corresponded to the exact value of the work done, and if it followed upon work, to which man was not bound, or which was more than he owed to God, and which he performed in his own strength, independent on God; then, it would be a recompense strictly merited by him, and so would, in the highest sense of the phrase, be a reward of debt to him. Or even though the value of the work done, bore no proportion to that of the reward, and though it were work which man previously owed to God, and which he performed in strength received from him; yet, if God had made a *covenant* with man, in which he promised to him the reward of eternal life, for the perfect performance of that work; then, eternal life would be a reward of *pactional debt* to man, upon his complete performance of the work. On the other hand, when the reward is given, not according to the intrinsic worth, but according to the spiritual *nature or quality*, of the work, and of the work as already due to the Lord; and when it is conferred, not in consideration of the work done, but because of the free favour of God to the believer who has done the work; it is in that case a reward of grace. Although eternal life is given to the true Christian,

[h] Rom. xi. 6.

not as a recompense *for* his good works, but only as a gift of infinitely free grace; yet, in the Scriptures, it is styled a reward to him, because it is conferred on him, *in* and *after* his works.

While the gospel teaches us, that good works are unnecessary to the justification of a sinner before God, it affirms that they *are necessary* in the life of a saint. It, indeed, excludes them from being federal conditions, or procuring causes of salvation; but it includes them *in* salvation, both as parts, and as consequences of it. We are not saved on the ground of them; but we are "careful to maintain them," because we are saved, and "saved by grace through faith." "The grace of God" exhibited in the glorious gospel, enables, as well as "teaches us, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world[i]:" nor have we truly discerned, or received, that grace "which bringeth salvation," if it have not effectually taught and enabled us to do so. Reader, let it be your diligent endeavour, to trust at all times in the Lord Jesus, for that great salvation which he has brought near to you, in the offers and promises of the glorious gospel; and to trust in him for it, in order that you may thereby be enabled to perform good works. You can do nothing that is spiritually good, except you trust and pray daily, for grace to enable you. Let "the life, then, which you live in the flesh, be by the faith of the Son of God;" and in this way, you shall so die to the law in its federal form, as to "live unto God." Rely on his con-

[i] Tit. ii. 11, 12.

summate righteousness, and on that *only*, for all your *title* to salvation; and trust to his overflowing fulness, for all supplies of grace, necessary to make you advance daily, in the love and practice of every good work. Faith in the adorable Redeemer, is the first act of acceptable obedience, and the root of all other spiritual graces. Implanted by the Holy Spirit in the heart, it is the principle, and the primary mean, of that evangelical "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord[k]." Trust then, and trust with all your heart, in the compassionate Saviour, for justification by his spotless righteousness, and for sanctification by his Holy Spirit. Come to the Lord Jesus, and, upon the warrant afforded you, by the unlimited offers and calls of his glorious gospel, place the confidence of your heart in Him for that holiness, which is the beginning, and the very essence, of salvation by him; which, instead of being the proper condition of salvation, is salvation *itself*. Thus, by grace derived from his fulness, you shall become "zealous of good works;" zealous for performing them, and equally zealous for placing no dependance on them, for a title to Divine favour; and so, you shall "be filled with those fruits of righteousness, which are by Him, unto the glory and praise of God[l]." United by faith to the second Adam, as your Head of righteousness and of life, you shall live a life of progressive obedience in time, and of perfect obedience through eternity. O be persuaded that, union and communion with Christ, as your righteousness and strength, are indispens-

[k] Heb. xii. 14. [l] Philip. i. 11.

ably requisite, to your being capable of performing such works, as will be good and acceptable to an infinitely holy God. You yourself must, in union with Christ, be accepted as *righteous*, and have a right to eternal life, *before* any of your works can be accepted as *sincere*. The great Redeemer is in the gospel freely offered to you, that you may have a warrant so to believe in him, as to be united to him; and it is at your peril, if you reject the gracious offer. Do not say, 'I *cannot* believe in him, and why should I be doomed to more dreadful destruction, for not doing what I cannot do?'—You cannot believe in the Saviour, because you *will* not; just as Joseph's brethren could not speak peaceably to him, because they hated him. Were you really willing to believe in Christ, and yet were not able, you could not be an object of blame. But it is quite the reverse with sinners: they are not able, because they are *not willing*[m]; and they are not willing to come to Christ, because their carnal mind is enmity against him[n]. Their inability is moral, and therefore sinful impotence. Nothing renders them unwilling, but the sin that reigns in them. If you be *willing* to come to the Saviour, you will, in the same proportion, be able. No sinner was ever willing to come to him, and yet was not able. In order, then, that you may be made willing to come, you ought, without delay, to trust and plead this absolute promise, which, in and with Christ himself, is graciously offered to you—"I will take away the

[m] John v. 40. [n] Rom. viii. 7.

stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh[o];" and also this one:—"In his name shall the Gentiles trust[p]."

If Christ is the way to God and to glory, and if he is the way of holiness, or the holy way; then you who have believed through grace, ought to take heed, that you *walk constantly* in that way. "As you have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him[q]." In union with Him, go forward daily, in the exercise of faith and love, and in the practice of holiness. Depending on his grace and strength, advance with holy diligence, and with increasing ardour, in the daily practice of those good works, which are "works of faith, and labours of love." Make constant progress in your exercise of faith, and by sanctifying, and comforting, influences from the fulness of Christ, walk on, with cheerfulness and resolution, in Him, as your *way* to the perfection of holiness and of happiness. To walk in Christ is, in consequence of union with him, and by communications of grace from him, to walk in the unwearied exercise of trusting and hoping in him; to "walk in his commandments[r];" and to walk in the love and practice of all good works[s]. Having, then, become dead to the law as a covenant, by the body of Christ, apply and trust the promises of his gospel; and in the faith of the promises, walk in all the commandments of his law as a rule. In the humble confidence, that he performs the promises of his glorious gospel to you, and so "worketh in you both to will and to

[o] Ezek. xxxvi. 26. [p] Matth. xii. 21. [q] Col. ii. 6.
[r] 2 Chron. xvii. 4. [s] Eph. ii. 10.

do," keep the commandments of his holy law. Keep them diligently; and "whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in his name," and "to the glory of God" in him. Thus, shall you "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called[t];" and "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work[u]." Thus, you shall both "adorn the *gospel* of God your Saviour in all things," and honour his righteous *law*.—O believer, much depends on your behaviour! The men of the world around you, will always be ready to spy out every blemish in *your* conduct, in order to justify their contempt of you, and their disapprobation of your sentiments. Others may commit many sins, and escape censure; but if *you* do any thing wrong, or discover inconsistency even in a single instance, every mouth will be open, not against you merely, but against your principles, and all who profess them. Take heed then, that you "give no occasion to the enemies of the Lord, to speak reproachfully;" but rather, that on every occasion you study "with well-doing, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men[w]." You are one of the children of light: "Let then your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven[x]."

In conclusion: From what has been said we may see, how good works are *related both to the law and the gospel.* Four things are to be remarked concerning such works; viz. *obligation* to them, *assistance* in them, *acceptance* of them, and *reward* ac-

[t] Eph. iv. i.
[u] Col. i. 10.
[w] 1 Pet. ii. 15.
[x] Matth. v. 16.

cording to them. The first proceeds from the law as a rule of duty, in the hand of the Mediator; and the other three, from the gospel in its strict acceptation. The obligation to perform them, arises from the sovereign authority of God our Saviour, revealed in the law: assistance in performing them, is afforded by his strength, promised in the gospel: the acceptance of them flows from his righteousness, revealed and offered in the gospel; and the reward according to them, proceeds from his boundless grace, displayed and tendered also in the gospel. Much more, therefore, is requisite to the performance of good works, than merely to know, that they are enjoined in the law. That, indeed, is requisite to the right performance of them; but it is far from being *all* that is needful. Many think it sufficient for them, only to *know* their duty; and no sooner do they seem to themselves to know it, than they immediately, and inconsiderately, attempt the performance of it. But all they, who "have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ," and so "are made wise unto salvation, through faith which is in him," know that, much more is requisite to the right performance, even of the smallest duty, than to know that it is commanded in the law. They not only look, therefore, to the law as a rule, for authority to oblige them to the practice of good works, as well as for direction, in performing them; but they look also to the gospel, and to the Saviour, offered in it, for strength to perform them, for merit to render them acceptable to God, and for a reward of grace to crown them. If the true Christian, then, would "be ready to every good work," he

must be excited and resolved, not only to receive the *law* of Christ as his rule of direction; but to believe with application to himself, the *gospel of* Christ, and in believing it, to trust with firm confidence in Him, for assistance, acceptance, and a gracious reward. Thus he will be enabled, whilst he sojourns in this valley of tears, to serve God acceptably; and at length, he will be graciously rewarded with the inexpressible honour of *serving*, as well as of enjoying, God and the Lamb, for ever and ever, in the holy place on high: "For there, his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face[y]."

[y] Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

THE END.

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